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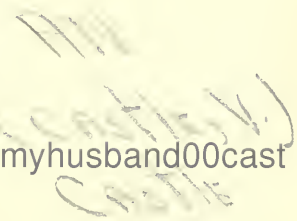

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MY HUSBAND

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ASTOR LENOX

From a photograph by Mr Gerald Richmond

Vernon Castle

MY HUSBAND

BY

MRS. VERNON CASTLE

(IRENE CASTLE)

"Greater love hath no man than this—
That he lay down his life for his friend"

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1919

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Published March, 1919

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO

MY MOTHER

BECAUSE OF HER UNDYING DEVOTION

TO HIM

"SUCH A LITTLE WHILE"

How short a while it seems since we were glad;
And danced; or laughed together at a play!
Nor did we ever think of Life as sad;
It seemed so sweet to us — just yesterday.

Together we had drunk our cup of Fame
And, side by side, had loved, and worked, and played
And Life to us seemed but a happy game;
We met our fortunes laughing — unafraid.

And then — the War! Its meaning well we knew;
Hushed were our hearts; we dared not speak of Life.
Our haunting fears in each swift moment grew
Beneath the darkening shadow of the strife.

One day in silence, dear, you went away —
In silence braver than brave words; I know
You felt I would never have you stay,
However hard it was to let you go.

Yet now it only seems but yesterday
That you were here, and smiled and talked of war
As children do, who with tin soldiers play;
How hard to think you gone forevermore!

And now you lie quite still! You laugh no more;
Those lips, that loved Life well, are mute to-day.

* * * * * * *

And so the lights are dimmed, the dance is o'er,
The music hushed — the laughter dies away.

IRENE CASTLE.

"Such a Little While."

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PREFACE

I NATURALLY have hesitated about publishing letters so personal as these of my husband to me while he was at the front. The following extracts are of course only a small part of what he wrote, for I have taken out all that seemed too sacred to be made public and locked it tightly in my heart.

There are three reasons why I wished to publish these little snatches from his letters. First, because I felt they would give you a clearer insight into the tender and sympathetic, as well as the humorous, side of his nature; secondly, that his memory might not fade from the minds of the public who in these sad times forget all too easily; and thirdly, that those who loved him might become better acquainted with his experiences and achievements at the front. His letters modestly tell of much that he experienced in his nine months in France in a far more interesting and convincing way than I could.

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MY HUSBAND

CHAPTER I

AN airplane manned by an instructor and a cadet was about to land safely on a Texas flying field when another machine, piloted by a student, rose just in front. The instructor, who was riding in the front seat, made what is called an Immelman turn in order to avoid a collision. Those who saw the accident say that, possessing, as he did, so perfect an understanding of flying, the instructor must have been certain that the forty feet between him and the ground was not enough space in which to make the turn. It was enough, however, to avoid cleverly the other machine. His own crashed, nose down. The instructor, Vernon Castle, was killed.

Certain papers, in relating the accident, put it that Vernon Castle had "made good by his glorious self-sacrifice." Their idea seemed to be that by his death Vernon Castle had atoned for his earlier sins, whatever they may have been. It seemed inconceivable to them that a dancer — a professional dancer and man of the stage — could be a fighter. He was not a fighter in the sense

that he liked war. He was not a soldier of adventure nor any other kind. He hated discipline and the restrictions attached to a life in barracks. He loved above all other surface things the theatre, restaurants, cafés, and other places of amusement. All this he gave up gladly because his country was at war and he was too good a sport to shirk his share of the hardship and dangers that are the lot of a soldier.

Speaking before a meeting of the Actors' Equity Association, Francis Wilson said that there seemed to be an impression that Vernon Castle had redeemed himself by his glorious death. The speaker declared that, in his opinion, Vernon Castle's evolution of the modern dance had brought joy to so many Americans, young and old, that "he is to be credited with one of the greatest achievements of the day."

I, who knew him better than any one else, know that he would have been worth while even if he had never flown, even if he had never gone to war. His was a rare spirit and a generous one.

There is a bugaboo in the American theatre that will not die easily, and that is that a performer is like the parts he plays. Women who

play vampires on the stage or in the movies are credited by a part of the public with knowing their business from the inside and to be personally guilty of everything except, perhaps, arson. So a man who plays a fool must be a fool.

Vernon had no intention of going on the stage. That he did go on was largely a matter of accident. Cast for eccentric parts in several of Lew Fields's productions, he played them as well as he could and with the feeling of an artist — without thought of his own future or that he would be linked with a certain type of part. Added to this, he had the casualness and the spirit of the amateur in his work on the stage.

In one of the Fields shows, I believe it was "The Summer Widowers," there was a scene in what was at that time called a delicatessen shop. Vernon came in dressed in a ridiculous tight green suit with a silly high green hat which accentuated his slightness, and asked for some rat poison. "Shall I wrap it up, or will you eat it here?" was the line that fell to Lew Fields, and Fields could never have been so funny with that line if Vernon had not been willing to go the whole way in his clowning.

So much in an effort to destroy a popular misconception.

Vernon Blyth (the name Castle was assumed) was born at Norwich, England. He was the only boy in a family where there were four girls — all older, and all of whom adored him. His mother died when he was quite young, and neither his sisters nor his father ever spanked him in his life, and I am told that when he wouldn't eat anything or wear something they had bought for him they had only to tell him it "came from France" to have it meet with approval in his eyes. If it was his dinner, it was always "French chops" and "French peas" — the word "French" worked like magic on his tiny imagination. No one knows where this great respect for France came from, but it was strange that years later we should make our first real lasting success in Paris, and that a few years after that he should join the army to fight side by side with the French.

He seems to have had the schooling that Norwich afforded. Like many another small boy, he one day strung the house with electric bells and wires. He was immediately stamped in the

Vernon Castle, age five.

Vernon Castle, age ten.

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family as an electrical engineer, though I never saw him show any knowledge of electricity in later years, and he certainly never offered to wire our house with bells. Nor did he ever have any suggestions for repairing them when they were out of order.

In London Vernon somehow discovered St. George's Hall, where there is a bill made up of sleight-of-hand performers. Most persons find one conjurer on a vaudeville bill sufficient, and I will confess that it is too much for me, but Vernon revelled in the bill at St. George's. He hung round till he learned to do many of the simpler tricks and until he solved some that were supposed to possess a dash of the mysterious. Often as a fancied onlooker from the audience he was able to go on the stage and confound the conjurer. Before he was twenty he took up conjuring as a business, and appeared at clubs or other private entertainments. In a scrap-book which Vernon kept in the years before I knew him — later all business details, even the trivial ones, like the keeping of scrap-books, were turned over to me — I found a letter telling him how much his entertainment had pleased. This seems

to have been his first professional engagement, and it was under the name of Blyth that he appeared. There seems to have been no reason why he should not have gone on with this work. Everybody encouraged him, but he was always eager to take up new things, like a child with a new toy. The thing or the feat that he mastered yesterday had little attraction for him to-day.

In July, 1906, together with his father, his sister, Coralie Blyth (Mrs. Lawrence Grossmith), Lawrence Grossmith, James Blakely, and Jerome Kern, he came to New York. Mr. and Mrs. Grossmith had come over to play in "The Orchid." Vernon had nothing to do except to hang round the dressing-rooms. He was not tempted to see the country, for a Sunday at Coney Island the day after they arrived, seems to have discouraged greatly this English family. Not having been brought up as strap-hangers or having suffered the inconvenience of overcrowded trolleys and subways, which we have been educated to accept as a necessary evil here, they found travelling short distances quite unbearable, and Mr. Blyth sailed within a week for England.

The hurry and bustle of jostling crowds is something never found in England, and the hardest thing for English people to get used to over here is our "speed," though Vernon adapted himself readily enough to it a little later, and the tremendous vitality and energy he developed left me way behind. After he had made America his home for a time there was no one who could keep up with him. He rode and swam harder than any one else and could outsit any one at a party, requiring very little sleep, and despising more than anything, an idle moment. He seemed absolutely tireless and more alive than any one I have ever known; in fact, his "speed" caused him many nervous moments in the small courts of Long Island when we lived there.

During rehearsals Vernon's idleness seems to have suggested to Lawrence Grossmith that something be found for him to do. Lew Fields, who was producing "The Orchid," consented to give Vernon a small part, and in a duel scene he appeared as one of the seconds. Much as he was interested in the theatre he had no thought at that time of taking it seriously. He did not wish to appear under his own name of Blyth, and

then, too, his sister was well known under that name. Largely out of consideration for her he took the name of Castle. When I first met him I naturally thought it a perfectly genuine name, but it was Lawrence Grossmith who applied it, and "Windsor Castle" seems to have been the inspiration.

"The Orchid" was never done as a play, but several scenes were taken out of it and incorporated in Lew Fields's production of "About Town," which opened at the Herald Square Theatre with Lew Fields, George Beban, Harry Fisher, Joe Herbert, Jack Norworth, Lawrence Grossmith, Coralie Blyth, Edna Wallace Hopper, Louise Allen Collier, Elita Proctor Otis, and Louise Dresser. When the company went on the road Vernon became his brother-in-law's understudy, and at one time played that part in conjunction with his own.

His success with Lew Fields was very great, but in the early days he was considered merely as an eccentric comedian who must have been like the parts he played — that is, a burlesque Englishman, and one of the earliest importers of a wrist-watch — then so sneered at and now so popular,

Vernon Castle at the age of nineteen.

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the Americans finally having acknowledged its usefulness and adaptability for uniforms and sports. He was in "Old Dutch," "The Girl Behind the Counter," "The Midnight Sons," and "The Summer Widowers." In one of these he had a dance with poor, charming Lotta Faust, who had previously made her great hit in "The Wizard of Oz." So far as I know this is the first dancing that Vernon did in public.

In many ways Lew Fields's production of "The Hen-Pecks" was most important in his career and in mine also. Here Vernon made his first real hit, and in this part the critics grudgingly began to admit that he had a talent for the stage and was an excellent foil for Lew Fields. His rôle was that of Zowie, the "Monarch of Mystery," and to this rôle Vernon brought all his skill as a sleight-of-hand performer. Of course the tricks he did on the stage were burlesque ones, but no one without a thorough understanding of the conjurer's work could possibly have done the part so well as he did.

It was when he was playing the rôle of Zowie that I first met him at New Rochelle. I think it was at a swimming party. Like every young

girl, I was tremendously interested in the theatre and every one connected with it. I had always wanted to go on the stage, and my few amateur performances confirmed me in my desire. Vernon was the first actor I had met, and I think at the time I was vastly more interested in him than he in me. Unlike most parents, my father had no objection to my going on the stage. He thought that both my sister and I ought to learn something by which we could earn our own living. I asked Vernon to help me get on the stage. He was very nice about it, but, as I remember, he showed no particular enthusiasm. At that time I did not understand how much and how thoroughly the amateur can bore the professional, especially when he wants help. Always considerate, as I came to know so well later on, he promised me that he would talk to Lew Fields about me. Some time later he told me that Lew Fields would listen to me, and I was given a trial. My agitation was, of course, very great. I had come in from New Rochelle with a pianist, who feebly accompanied me in the huge dark theatre. I danced with castanets a sort of Spanish tarantella. Later in the Fields

production of "The Summer Widowers" in Brooklyn I appeared for the first time in public under the name of Irene Foote.

In March, 1911, after Vernon had been playing Zowie, the "Monarch of Mystery," for some time, we became engaged. My father liked Vernon very much, but he was not especially pleased at our engagement. He contended that actors never had any money, and although he in no way wished me to marry for that alone, he wanted very much to feel reasonably sure that I would have the every-day comforts of life. He also feared "international marriages" of any kind, even though an Englishman is not classed as a foreigner with us. He felt that differences of environment and upbringing tended to cause unhappiness. Finally he was won over, and in the month of May we were married at my home in New Rochelle. When the run of "The Hen-Pecks" closed for the summer we sailed for Europe to meet my new family. On the way to England we took part in all the deck sports and won thirteen out of fourteen events. Our teamwork could not be touched. In the potato race and the three-legged race we broke the ship's

records. It was a happy crossing, with the most delightful lot of passengers that we have ever encountered. One little boy that Vernon befriended and learned to love told his nurse that he thought we must be a king and queen because our name was "Castle" and we always dressed in white.

It was in London on this trip that we had our first quarrel and, as my father had predicted, it was an international one. Like all Americans who travel for the first time I found everything in London inferior to New York. I complained bitterly at this, that, and the other thing not being just as it was at home, all of which must have been unbearable to Vernon.

Finally one day he exploded when I severely criticised some stupid little speckled bananas, claiming that we had beautiful long fat yellow ones at home. This was the last straw; poor Vernon really had to defend himself by stating (which was quite true) that "they were not grown in England, anyway, and came from the same place that supplied those I had in New Rochelle." We laughed so about this afterward. Each year I went back to England I found it more and more delightful.

From a photograph by Hall.

Vernon Castle and Irene Foote shortly before their marriage.

In March, 1911, after Vernon had been playing Zowie . . . for some time, we became engaged.

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I met all my new family, and there were many of them. It is a very embarrassing moment always when a husband or wife brings home their "other half" to be given "the once over" by the family. I felt it keenly, because I was so typically American and, I am afraid, a little slangy. I could not help but be a little jealous also at all the love and devotion showered on him by his father and sisters. They seemed always to have their arms around his neck, and I felt very out of place and uncomfortable. Every time I spoke at all there was a dreadful silence and I mistook their very sweet manners for ridicule and felt a great longing for "home and mother," all of which quickly vanished on our return visit, so that now the devotion I feel for them is only second to the love I bear my own family.

As "The Hen-Pecks" was to reopen in August our trip was a short one. When the play did reopen I was given a very small part. My singing made it safer from the point of view of the management. I was never in the chorus, an experience which might have proved valuable to me later. I had a few words to say, and for saying them got twenty-five dollars a week, the same

salary that Vernon received when he first played with Lew Fields. Of course at this time he was getting one hundred dollars a week. From that day on we pooled our interests, and though we could not live very royally Vernon somehow managed to save more money than he had ever done before, or, for that matter, than he ever did afterward. For my first Christmas present he bought me a diamond ring which must have cost nearly five hundred dollars. I had never had any jewelry before. There were long days of waiting for Christmas morning. I had had it slipped on my finger with my back turned, and I had heard every one exclaim over it. Then after Christmas came proud days of hanging onto a Subway strap, gloveless, so that all might see. How different from that later Christmas when he was in France flying and I was on the Pacific coast in the midst of a much and often delayed movie serial. We had hoped to be together. I have his letter: "I don't know how I am going to buy you a Christmas present. One can't get anything here. I tried to fly to Versailles for one day so that from there I could get into Paris, but I couldn't do it. It will be terrible if when

Christmas comes you don't get anything from me."

In one of the Lew Fields productions Vernon had danced with Lotta Faust, and he was anxious after I joined "The Hen-Pecks" to dance a number with me. As Zowie he had a song which was called "It's not the Trick Itself, but the Tricky Way It's Done." He wanted the dance arranged for the encore. No one encouraged us overmuch, and I suppose we were not very keen about it, for all we did was to write on paper about what we thought we would do. This custom of writing out our dances first was almost always adhered to in later days. The first dance we wrote we never even rehearsed, though we might have had the stage at any time. In the days before we were married, though we went to many of the same parties, I am sure that we never danced together. Necessity made us dancers, and it was not until we got to Paris that necessity urged us.

It was while we were playing in "The Hen-Pecks" that I first knew, or came to know, of Vernon's boundless love for animals. He had never had a pet of any sort. The love of animals

and all dumb, helpless things was there, but it was awaiting another's influence to bring it out. My home was full of pets. My father took great pride in his show dogs, and one of the first presents he gave us was an English bull that went with us on our travels and was our greatest comfort on our first trip to Paris, and Vernon never, in his daily letters written in England and on the flying field of France, forgot to inquire about our pets. And always he mentioned the monkeys or dogs that he had with him in France (often in spite of orders). Quite the happiest of all his letters from France is one that tells of his joy upon landing in a field and then visiting a little farm. Here it is:

"To-day I have a little something to write about. I am afraid I can't make a whole lot of it. When I went up for my flight this morning on a Bleriot monoplane I took up a sergeant with me who wanted a ride, and when we were up about ten miles from the airdrome an inlet valve broke, which means you have to turn off your petrol and come down at once, or your machine is apt to catch fire. Well, I managed to spot a young wheat-field and manœuvred to

land there quite respectably. Of course we were surrounded by the usual crowd of children and farm-hands, who in this unhappy country see machines in the air every day, but never see them closely. Presently the owner of the field came along in a motor bike and side-car and he very kindly offered to take me to his farm, where I could telephone, so I left the sergeant in charge and went off with the farmer. He was quite young and very clever. He has the cutest farm, darling, I have ever seen. Six dogs of different sizes and breeds, little ducks in ponds, and ever so many cows in a dairy; little colts and everything in the world that goes with a farm. The loveliest old house. He lives there all alone and makes his living as a farmer. How I wish you could have been there with me! He must have thought I was a fool, for I was so tickled with his dogs and little ducks, only a day old, swimming about, not caring a darn about their chicken mother. He gave me a peach of a lunch and I returned to my 'plane and found that it had been fixed. I said good-by and sailed away. The field was much more difficult to get out of than in, but I managed to dodge

the trees, and so ended a very pleasant little diversion."

I remember one time when he was in Canada with the Royal Flying Corps and I went up there to see him. We were driving along a little dirt road from Belleville to Deseronto, when suddenly the car swerved to the side of the road and he brought it to an abrupt stop. Getting out he picked up a turtle that was crossing the road in front of our motor. He carried it good-naturedly to a little pond about fifty yards ahead and deposited it on the muddy bank. When he came back he explained to me that the natives often took them home and carved out their shells for parlor ornaments with no thought of even killing them first. That act was characteristic of Vernon Castle. His last pet was a large Reeses monkey that he took with him everywhere. Jeffry was his name, but Vernon always called him "my boy," because, as he explained, "he thinks he's a boy and you mustn't hurt his feelings."

To go back again to "The Hen-Pecks." In that show there was a barber-shop scene which you have seen imitated many times, both in the

movies and on the stage. It was in the beginning crude, rough fun, and it has not become refined by repetition. Lew Fields was the barber and Vernon the customer. There was a very messy stage shampoo during which an egg was poured into his mouth eight times a week — that being more times than there are breakfasts, Vernon ever after distrusted eggs. The whole act ended when the very bright red wig he wore was burned off with a bang. The act never failed to produce laughter and it was this act which caused a Paris manager to engage us for a French revue. It never really was done in Paris, but it was that Vernon might act this scene that we were engaged. Before I leave "The Hen-Pecks" for good and all I want to mention that it was here that we saw Blossom Seeley do the Texas Tommy dance after her song, "Toddling the Todolo." This dance and song, or what we remembered of it, came to our rescue in Paris.

As I look back, our going to Paris seems to me to have been one of the most courageous of long chances. We didn't know exactly what we were going to do nor how we would go about it. Had any one urged us not to go, in all probability the

trip would have been called off. I believe that had Lew Fields offered us a contract for five years at the combined salary of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a week we'd have signed. He was, however, extremely generous in that when the Paris manager stipulated that Vernon must do the barber-shop scene he gave him all rights. So, since we had no reason to refuse — less, even, than we had for going — we decided to set sail.

Vernon was so like a little boy. He was interested in everything, and to go abroad on the little money we had saved seemed quite all right. I, the more practical of the two, was caught and deceived by his enthusiasm. Then, too, he thought it would be amusing, and he loved being amused, just as he loved to amuse. To the theatre he went, no matter how ill he was. He never quite got over the beginner's love of the theatre's back stage. The people he met there all interested him and they worshipped him, just as the people did who met him in restaurants and cafés. I have never heard of any one who disliked him, and I don't believe he really disliked any one either, but he could get most delight-

fully bored; things had to keep up a pretty lively tempo to hold his interest, and even those he loved bored him at times. For instance, I can remember going with him time and again to see his old grandmother in Norwich. She adored Vernon, and for her he had a deep devotion and a great respect, but, naturally, her sheltered world had little in it of attraction for him and they could find nothing to talk about; so while he would sit with legs crossed in a big chair, patiently for him, I would tell the dear old lady what I could of the things we had done, though, of course, all these things she would much rather have heard from him. Granny loved jewelry, and Vernon once induced me to take my jewel-box to show her. She had never seen the flexible, modern sort of settings. She was so interested, and while she was holding a broad diamond necklace under the light with her shaky hand it sparkled and danced. Vernon said: "Granny, you ought to work in a jewelry shop, you make them sparkle so." She was never hurt at his worst neglect. He hated writing home, and never wrote her. When I first met him he had not written home in three years. He was just thoughtless, but no one

was ever cross with him for long — even process servers.

One day when we drove into our place at Manhasset a man jumped on the running-board of the car and served him with a summons to appear in court on a thirty-thousand-dollar suit that had been brought against us. You could not load Vernon with responsibility, and he laughed cheerfully. "Have you been waiting here all day for me? Why didn't you come in and ask for me?" he said. "I was around somewhere." Then he asked the man in for a drink, chuckling to himself that the poor fool had stood out at that gate all day when he might just as well have come in and served the old summons. He was amused, too, that he should be sued for thirty thousand dollars when it might just as well have been a million, for all he cared. In spite of the money he made he never had any. He loved spending it so. To the waiter who served him he gave an amount equal to the check, contending that it was not extravagant, since the waiter worked harder than he did. In a shop he never asked for the price of anything. If he bought a canoe he asked for the best; he accepted it as such in good

faith. Even if it wasn't, it was better so than to be bothered by figures and money. You simply could not persuade him to save for the future. I am happy now that he spent and enjoyed the money he made to the fullest degree. No one knew better how to spend than he. He bought everything he ever saw that he wanted and beat his little drums to the distraction of every one else, like a naughty boy, till the end.

But he was not selfish, with all his love of pleasure. He never failed to be considerate, and I have seen him spend a whole afternoon repairing a boy's bicycle and working on it long after the boy had ceased to be interested in whether it would ever be repaired or not.

With his love for pleasure went another love — a love for humor. He loved the comic strips and cartoons of the evening papers. He was fond of people who had a sense of humor, and possessed a very keen one himself. His letters from the aviation fields are full of quaint, unusual bits of observation and fun.

CHAPTER II

SO we sailed for Paris, with a great many good wishes, very little money, and accompanied by Walter and Zowie. Walter was an old negro who had been a servant in my family for a great many years. He went along as cook, valet, and general utility. Zowie was an English bulldog, named after Vernon's part in "The Hen-Pecks."

The contract which had been signed with the French manager in New York did not include me, but it was thought that I might be fitted in somehow. As the manager had seen me in the small part I had in "The Hen-Pecks" it was not surprising that he should have made no effort to sign me up for his new revue.

We had an uneventful trip over, uneventful save for the deck sports. We travelled on the S.S. *Zealand*, and arrived in Antwerp, where we were fascinated by the cathedral and narrow, winding streets. I was particularly interested in the milk-carts drawn by dogs. We found them very serious-minded dogs, that were trained early

in life to attend to business alone. They passed all other dogs in the street without even turning their heads or showing the slightest interest. They did not seem to care to make friends.

As we were not due in Paris for a few days we decided to see Brussels, which we found a baby Paris. There there were more dog-carts — some drawing hay and wood or moving families from one house to another. In the lace shops there was so much that I wanted to buy and so little that I could afford. I did get some little Dutch bonnets that met with great success in Paris and afterward were widely copied here. But this was not till after we had appeared in "The Sunshine Girl" and at Louis Martin's. The lines of these Dutch bonnets even went one season into bathing-caps and motor bonnets. In Brussels we saw two or three revues of which we understood no word; dined in a few dainty little restaurants; got fleeced by the usual highwayman interpreter in the hotel, and at last, with a fast-thinning "roll," we boarded the train for Paris and our uncertain future.

Darker days and a period of great uncertainty lay ahead of us. We sensed this immediately

upon arriving in Paris. I had taken over five hundred cigarettes with me, not knowing that it was against the law to take them into France. We also had some playing-cards and matches, which we learned afterward was almost as bad as to try and smuggle in a bomb in war-time. The customs authorities seized our trunks and held them. Walter stayed at the station to watch our belongings, while we sat in our expensive hotel doing nothing. At last he came back with the bad tidings that the cigarettes, matches, and cards were to be confiscated and that we must pay six hundred francs fine. Now, six hundred francs was just about half of all the money we had in the world. It hurt to pay this, but it was useless to protest, as we could not speak French and did not know how to plead our case.

That same afternoon while trying to jam the cork into an "eau de cologne" bottle by pounding it on a bedpost the bottle broke, and all the cologne flew into poor Zowie's eyes, who was lying on the bed. It burned her awfully, and she nearly went mad trying to rub it out of her eyes on the carpet. We rushed her out to a drug-store and there they sent us to a veterinarian's,

From a photograph by Félix, Paris.

Irene Castle and Zowie in Paris, April, 1912.

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who was afraid that she would lose the sight of one eye anyway. This completely disheartened us because we adored her. I felt entirely to blame for my carelessness, and was picturing myself driving her around through the parks day after day (because she loved driving) to make up for the loss of her sight. We bathed her eyes constantly and watched over her until at last her eyes became entirely well again, but they were nervous, unhappy days for us and did not tend to lighten the gloom which had settled down on us since our happy days aboard ship.

Her death last year was the hardest to bear of any — until *his* came. Somehow I like to think that her little soul was waiting to greet his, so that he mightn't feel strange or alone in the great world above us. I can see her jumping and running with joy and licking his hand to show she had not forgotten, and crying — just a little — to find I had not come too.

As soon as we got in touch with the theatre for which Vernon had been engaged to do comic parts we learned that the revue had been postponed and that it would be six weeks before any money could be expected from *that* source. The

salary was less than in New York because we had been told that it was much cheaper living in Paris than in the United States. In the making of theatrical contracts this old gag has been worked many times. Now, living may have been cheaper in Paris, but it was not so for *us*, as we did not know French and had no idea where to buy things cheaply. For the foreigner Paris is probably the most expensive place in the world. We did find out, however, that the hotel was costing us more than it need have, so we moved to a small three-room apartment in the rue St. George, half-way up the hill to Montmartre. It was very small, on the top floor, and the walls came in to meet you half-way, as they do in those attic rooms. We had one bedroom, Walter, our servant, the other, and the third was dining-room and sitting-room all in one. There was a small kitchen, in addition, where Walter cooked, when we had anything to cook, and a bath, a great luxury for a small apartment in Paris.

The management of the theatre promised me a small part, and rehearsals began. Our funds were low, and in order to pay our rent it was necessary to borrow two hundred francs from the theatre.

The weather was frightful, and we could not often walk to rehearsals. We dared not run the risk of spoiling our clothes in the bad weather. I had one suit, a dark-blue one, which I wore every day, washing the white flannel collar and cuffs every night to keep it looking fresh.

Our evenings we spent playing "seven up" with Walter, a game he had taught us and at which he always won, or walking with him through Montmartre to peek in at the dance-halls and cabarets. Night after night we watched other people enjoying the wonders of Paris. Walter learned a few words of French very quickly and did all the shopping. The shopkeepers liked him and often he brought me an orange or an apple that he had "worked" the old man, who kept the shop on the corner, for.

When we arrived in Paris we began the custom of keeping the big copper pennies in a little silk bag that hung on the door-knob. They were so big and clumsy that we did not want to carry them around in our pockets. Every night each one of us put his coppers into the bag, but it was not long before we had to make our "last stand" with it. We had borrowed from the management

of the theatre till we were afraid to ask for more; in fact, we were very little helped by the money that we borrowed from the theatre, for it invariably had to be turned over immediately to our landlady. She was a large, noisy woman, who was only amiable when "paid in full." Every time we paid the rent, however, we had one good dinner and blowout. It was usually at some little restaurant on the boulevard. Walter always went with us, for he was the only person we knew in Paris, and we loved his company. We had champagne on these occasions and more than we wanted to eat, because there was so little left from the rent it never seemed worth saving and the glass of wine washed our cares away and kept our misfortunes from swamping us. We even used to order a whole steak for Zowie, to make it a big night for her, too. I can remember Vernon buying me a petticoat and hat with one of our "rolls" of borrowed money. We had admired them both on our way to and from rehearsals, and I had looked so long and hungrily at the black-and-white-striped petticoat costing nineteen francs that, though we could ill afford it, Vernon insisted on buying it for me even before we paid the rent.

By the time we had dinner and had taken a cab home from one of our blowouts there was very little left to start the next day with.

Walter received no wages, but he was quite happy, and believed that our misfortunes would soon be over. We had sailed with such high hopes and good wishes from every one that we hated to admit that we were beaten at the outset. To have sent home for money, consequently, never occurred to us. We figured that we could hold out four days more if we lived on potatoes or milk, along with our fried eggs. We could not have both, but then in four days the revue ought to open, though rehearsals did not seem very encouraging.

Walter came to the rescue at the end of the fourth day. He rushed into the room carrying many packages. He had taught the valet in the apartment below ours to play craps. By risking nine centimes he had won three and one-half francs. To offset this good luck the revue was again delayed, and after carefully looking over our possessions for something to pawn, the choice fell upon a gold watch which had belonged to my great aunt. It was a very fat, ugly one that my

mother had loaned me with due ceremony to impress upon me its ancestral value. I felt very proud to be trusted with it, but now I parted with it tearlessly and forgot all of my promises to guard and prize it all the days of my life. Walter went out with it, and came back with fifteen francs. He had sold it outright for the gold. That night was another blowout.

We had reached that stage in the rehearsals at which it was possible to tell what the revue was going to be like. It was shaping up, but not to our satisfaction. Vernon hated his part. He was to play Duncan, a Greek poet, and the long-haired wig, short tunic, and sandals made him look quite ridiculous — more so than he had appeared in any of the comic costumes of the Lew Fields shows. Moreover, the scene did not seem very funny. When translated into English the lines had no point at all. We thought that they might have some meaning in French, but as the audience never laughed at them we decided we were right in the first place. Vernon was discouraged from the opening night. He wanted to give it up, but there was no turning back. We owed the company nearly one thousand francs, and

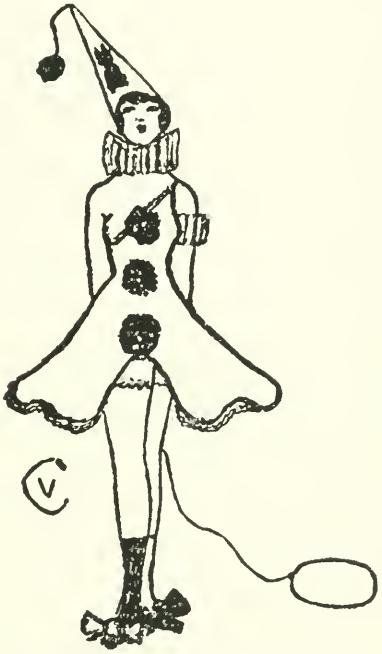
there was no way to pay except by working it out.

To this whole adventure there was but one satisfactory side, and that was the opportunity to do together a very pretty little pantomime called "The Lead Soldier and the Paper Doll." This was founded upon an old fairy-tale. It all happened in front of a huge fireplace. A singer stood near the footlights and told the story as we went through our little dance. Our costumes were lovely. Vernon had a tin-soldier suit, made out of silver cloth with the coat tinted blue and the trousers red. He carried a wooden gun. We both made up our faces in a doll-like way — with obvious eyelashes painted round our eyes and big red spots in the middle of our cheeks. I wore a white-taffeta dress with a tight bodice and full skirt, hung with garlands of pink paper roses. My hair was done in stiff little curls round my ears and slicked down flat on top. The story was the usual fairy-tale — we came to life, and the tin soldier who had long been in love with the paper doll tried to catch her in his funny stiff arms and tell her of his love. Being the usual coquettish young lady, she would have none of

his attentions and ran wildly about from one side of the stage to the other until he finally, broken-hearted, threw himself into the chiffon flames in the fireplace. Whereupon the doll, finding life unbearable without him, followed him to his fate with a wild leap into the fireplace. I had always hoped to do this pantomime in America, and it will always be one of my greatest regrets that we were never able to show our friends here the one happy souvenir of our first appearance in Paris.

In the last act of the revue we sang "Alexander's Rag Time Band." It created a great sensation — not our singing of it, but the song. We followed this with a sort of grizzly-bear dance. It was very rough, more so than any dance we ever did over here. In later years we tried to get away as much as possible from the acrobatic style of dancing, but at just this period it was the most popular. I wore a little short pierrot costume and carried a big white teddy-bear. It was a sort of Texas Tommy dance. As this was entirely from memory of what we had seen Blossom Seeley do in "The Hen-Pecks" it was quite unusual. Then too, Blossom Seeley had

danced alone, and we were trying, both of us, to imitate her Frisco style. It was liked in Paris and we were encouraged to go on. Vernon had



Vernon's Sketch Design for My Pierrot Costume

come to Paris, however, as a comedian, and particularly to do the barber-shop scene. Though he was happy with the dancing, he hated the small part of Duncan, the Greek poet. Besides,

the Olympia, where we were playing, was a dirty theatre and unspeakably evil-smelling behind the scenes, so we decided to get out when the money we had borrowed was paid back. In two weeks, after deducting the money advanced, the theatre owed us about ten francs. We were not disturbed, for we had become used to living on nothing and uncertainty. It seemed a rash thing to do, but we quit!

Luckily an agent we went to see suggested that we try out one night in the Café de Paris. This looked very good to us. Much to his distress (because he feared we might not land the job) I ordered a simple little white frock made for the occasion. It was to cost sixty francs. We did some work rehearsing our grizzly-bear dance and wrote one other rough-and-tumble number to ragtime. Louis, the head waiter of the café, asked us to come the night before our tryout. We were to have supper on him and to size up the audience. I put on my wedding-dress and a little Dutch bonnet for this, the most important chance of our stay in Paris. Papa Louis, as we came to call him later, gave us a good table and the best meal we had had since we left New York.

During the evening he came to us and told us that a Russian nobleman, who was one of his good patrons, had sent him over to ask us to dance. It seemed that some one had seen us at the Olympia after all! At first we refused. I had a dress on with a train, and we weren't keyed up to the work as yet. But Louis pleaded with us. The Russian was one of his very best customers, so I pinned up my train and we resolved to do our best.

Fortunately, that afternoon we had been to the café to rehearse with the orchestra leader. He was all prepared, and though we were not we sailed out onto the floor. It was a trying moment, as we had not been dancing long enough to feel great confidence. But once we had started, and Vernon had given me a little reassuring squeeze, nothing mattered. Perhaps it was the informality of our first cabaret performance, perhaps it was because the audience thought that we were guests, perhaps because we were new at the game; in any event, our little dance was much applauded. While we were both quivering with nervous excitement, for it meant so much to us after the weeks of discouragement,

Louis came up with three hundred francs from his Russian friend. He asked that we repeat the dance. Vernon was most embarrassed and quite proudly insisted that we could not take the money. I stepped hard on his foot and "collared" the three hundred. I did not feel that we could refuse; primarily because we needed it so much and then I thought that we might easily offend the Russian nobleman by doing so. This seemed to me an especially bad thing to do, as it had been made clear to us that he was so great a friend of Louis. I was right, it was the custom in Paris to tip all entertainers lavishly, and we afterward made much more from tips than through our contracts. We danced our encore, and went home very happy for the first time since we had arrived in France. With this performance behind us, our tryout, scheduled for the next night, held no terrors for us. When we got home we woke up poor Walter and flashed the three hundred francs in his face. It was worth the nick in our pride to see his expression of joy.

When we went to the Café de Paris the next night we found that Louis had kept us the same

table, which was a very good one. As there are only about thirty tables in the room, it was extremely generous of him to let us have it. Before this, cabaret entertainers had not been allowed to sit at a table as if they were guests. They were accustomed to appear from the kitchen or somewhere behind the piano. They did their specialty, and then made their exit as mysteriously as they had appeared. For the six months that we stayed at the Café de Paris we had supper each night at Louis's expense, and never once did we give up our table. All this was a great honor, and I feel that in many ways it helped tremendously toward the success we afterward attained. We were young, clean, married, and well-mannered. The respect shown us by the management was mirrored in the attitude of our audiences. My clothes were simplicity itself, and I had no jewelry, which makes me think of the saying "Nice girl — no jewelry." The French women were elaborately dressed and wore many jewels. I think the contrast interested them, and the youthful enthusiasm we showed for our work and the real joy we derived from dancing demanded attention. The dancing career of Mr.

and Mrs. Vernon Castle began by accident and there was little preparation for the work which won us our first real success.

We had not been long at the Café de Paris before Louis offered us a six months' engagement. I decided it would be best to wait a week or two to find out if our popularity continued. If so, I knew we could name our own terms. We were able to do this, and we continued to dance there for nearly six months. In addition, we had many private engagements every week. We danced with many famous and important people and later we gave two command performances.

From the bleak, dreary place that Paris was when we first arrived it became almost enchanted for us. We went to the races, the theatres, the other cafés and restaurants. We saw everything and met everybody. But through it all we continued to live in our little attic apartment because we had become so attached to it. Incidentally, Walter now received a salary.

Louis spoiled us. We could dance at any hour and at any moment we chose, and only as often as we liked. Sometimes it was only one dance.

Announcement of the Castles' appearance at the Café de Paris.

From a photograph by White.

Mr. and Mrs. Castle after their return from Paris.

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But in spite of Louis's kindness we were becoming anxious about New York. We were impatient to return, and though Louis begged us to stay on we decided to try our luck in America. I had a trunkful of beautiful new clothes that I was anxious to show to the people in my home town. So we sailed.

We came back to the Café de Paris many times to dance and to see Louis. Once we danced a week for him for nothing. That was the summer we were going to dance at Deauville. Louis wanted to engage us, but our salary had gone up so much and his place was so small that he couldn't possibly pay us what we had been receiving in America, so we decided to give him a week in an effort to repay somewhat his many kindnesses to us. Poor Louis! He was so disappointed that we couldn't stay all summer, but we had agreed to dance in Deauville for the month of August and we had literally outgrown the Café de Paris. The dancing space there was so small and our dances had expanded so much that we were hampered. But in that week that we spent with Louis we were very happy. The café was filled with happy memories of the year before

and it was so pleasant to be with Louis again. He watched us go through our different dances night after night. If a waiter so much as rattled a plate while we were dancing he would fly at him in uncontrollable rage.

At Deauville we were to be one of the attractions that was to help rival Trouville. We were to dance every night in the Casino at dinner-time. We were guests of the hotel, and everything, even our cigarettes and champagne, was provided for us. In addition, we had three hundred francs a day. In that happy summer it didn't seem worth while to save this money, so we gambled it all away each night at baccarat and petit cheveaux. We were both atrociously unlucky and not, like Walter, capable of teaching new games; but it was great fun. My mother was with us, and I can remember one night when Vernon had "dropped" our three hundred francs in particularly short order, he came back to mother and me to beg for more money with which he was *perfectly certain* of winning *this time*. I never fell for those stories, but mother was touched and gave him another hundred francs to run off and play with. Of course that went the way of

the first three hundred. We could soon tell this by his crestfallen look when he returned to us. He was such a child about gambling, as in everything else. He never won anything in his life, to my knowledge, but he never lost faith in his luck.

He might even have lost his life in a wager that he made in Texas shortly before his fatal accident, had it been taken up. Some one offered to bet him that he would not stand on one of the wings of an airplane when it was up. He agreed he would not do so, but that if some one would put up five hundred dollars he would run his machine through a hangar, come out, and go over the second, leap-frog fashion, drop down quickly, go through the third, and then, coming out, go over the top of the fourth hangar. This bet was not taken up.

Another summer, the next one, we were at Deauville, and things were very different. We had arrived in Paris in July and there were ugly rumors of a war. No one seemed certain, but there was an undercurrent of something unusual. Louis, who knew every one — all the important people — was sure that war would somehow be averted, and so on the last day of July, 1914,

we went once again to Deauville. Our contract called for our appearance on the 1st of August. We had told an American friend who was spending the summer in Europe that we would be at Deauville and that it was an amusing place in which to spend August. He was sitting disconsolate in the lobby of the hotel when we arrived. There were practically no guests, and those that were there were leaving by the score. We had passed hundreds of cars streaming down the road toward Paris as we neared Deauville. We went to the Casino where we were to dance. We wanted to talk things over with the orchestra leader. The deserted place on that summer afternoon was a picture I shall not soon forget. The great room was empty save for one or two onlookers, and the orchestra was playing the "Marseillaise." I have never heard anything more stirring, in view of what was impending, and the fact that they were playing for the last time together and all would leave to join their regiments soon. It made my heart stand still. Now we knew there was to be war. When they stopped playing, the orchestra leader spoke to us sadly; then he hastened away.

It occurred to us that we might as well try to get away, as we learned it was the last day one could sail for England without a passport — there was a refugee boat-load going out that night. Our contract had been cancelled by what is termed an "act of God," though I do not feel that any one, except the Kaiser, is willing to believe that God had anything to do with this terrible war.

The waiters were lined up in a long line that ran, snakelike, for many blocks down the street receiving their pay and starting as fast as they could for their mobilization points. All the baggagemen had gone, so, piling our trunks, hat-boxes, and hand packages as best we could onto an old cab which supported a very ancient horse, we galloped through Deauville with flapping side-curtains to get a boat from Trouville to Havre. We had arrived almost penniless from Paris and were unable to get any money in the hotel, though we pleaded for at least one day's salary to get us to England. They merely showed us empty cash-drawers and shrugged their shoulders and said, "C'est la guerre," a phrase all of us have had to hear so often since. Finally one of the

clerks told us that he had some Belgian money and we exchanged some perfectly good American Express checks for Belgian notes which were worth just about nothing then. We managed to get on a boat for Havre. Fortunately, in purchasing our tickets one of the Belgian notes was mistaken for a French note. We had Tell, Vernon's police dog, and one of my little Belgian griffons with us. We did not have the proper papers to take Tell out of France, nor the quarantine papers necessary to take him into England. He would not be allowed without them on the Channel boat, so we dashed madly about Havre trying to find a place where we could leave him. At last, after having looked over two other boarding-kennels which did not satisfy Vernon as being clean or safe places in which to leave Tell, we found a veterinary who agreed to keep him. After giving instructions to the man to look after Tell as though he were his only child and promising him a fat reward if he did, Vernon told Tell to go into one of the large straw-filled cages at the end of the room. Poor Tell, though looking very disturbed, obeyed perfectly as usual and walked into his little prison without

a murmur. Vernon was heart-broken. He begged me to go on to England and leave him there in Havre with Tell or let him go back to Paris and join mother (who was our bank and on whom we could always count when we needed a loan), but the trains for Paris had all been indefinitely discontinued. He hated to leave him, but it was the only way.

The Channel boat that night was hideously crowded. People stretched out on the decks with scarcely any space between them. Ordinarily the boat only carried about three hundred and twenty-five passengers — this night there were over six hundred. I slept, or tried to sleep, on the bench in the smoking-room, concealing my small Belgian griffon under my coat. We were held up four times by destroyers and coast-guard boats. Officials came on board to examine the passengers, then our course was altered because of mines, and instead of getting in at seven or eight in the morning we did not arrive until three-thirty that afternoon.

There was no food or water on the boat, and the next morning a rough sea added to our discomfort. With no water to wash in or drink and

nothing to eat we must have looked refugees indeed when we finally disembarked. I've never felt so dirty and untidy in all my life — having slept in my clothes without even taking my hair down (it was long then) — and my poor little dog hadn't put her feet to the ground in seventeen hours. I couldn't even let her stick her head outside of my coat, and I really thought she'd smother before I could finally put her down. Our luncheon on the train that afternoon was one of the most enjoyable meals I can ever remember.

Poor Vernon's heart was not happy, and after about three days he set out with some borrowed gold, which in those first days of the war would perform miracles, and a paper from the Board of Agriculture permitting Tell to be brought to England for quarantine. All the boats to Havre had been discontinued, and it was necessary to go by way of Calais. There he learned that he would have to go to Paris first and there take a train to Havre. He also learned that he would not be permitted to go on without a passport. It was too late to have a picture taken, so he filled out the necessary papers and stuck on a picture of some one else that he happened to have in his

pocket. It got by the authorities and he caught the first train for Paris. In Paris and everywhere along the line he met Americans looking for their families and friends, and Americans and English people clamoring to get back to England. Paris was like a crowded theatre in which some one had shouted "fire." People seemed to have lost all judgment and sense of balance.

Poor Vernon childishly forgot that he had been told not to go out on the streets at night. He tried to go to see my mother, who was stopping only a few blocks away from his hotel. A serious-minded soldier, who had completely lost his sense of humor, stopped him before he had gone fifty feet. In his agitation Vernon forgot mother's address, so, when asked where he was going, he stammered and stuttered and could not tell. Not that I think the soldier would have understood the French he spoke, in those days anyway. He was escorted back to his hotel.

He prevailed upon some officers to let him take a "hitch" down to Havre on a troop-train. With difficulty he found the place where Tell had been left on that hectic night. As our American friend had made most of the arrangements, his French

being better than ours, it was believed that Tell was his dog. When released from his cage Tell soon settled, however, who was his master. Somehow Vernon managed to smuggle him back to England. Tell was such a large dog that it seems impossible to have done so, but the generally upset conditions which marked the beginning of the war and a few gold pieces helped this project along greatly.

Vernon was very serious on his return from France. He wanted at that time to enlist. I fear I was responsible for his not doing so. I was sure, from what I had heard, that the war would soon be over. It didn't seem possible in those days that it could last, and I did not want him to go to war when it was apparently only a matter of a few months and we had important contracts to fill in New York. I prevailed, but my victory in this matter was only for a short time. He was resolved to go to war from the time he came back from France with Tell.

CHAPTER III

AT the Café de Paris we found that our biggest success was made by an acrobatic style of dancing, though we ourselves preferred the simpler dances. In returning to America we found that the public was just becoming interested in cabarets and the modern dances, so called. In reality, at that time, what was called a modern dance was apt to be an elaborated one with a good many frills and stunts. Accordingly, in our first performances — at Louis Martin's — we did the dances that that particular time demanded. Others have said, and so I think I may, that in the evolution of the modern dance Vernon played a great part, and though many of the dances that we did and originated were mere fads and crazy things at best, they were nevertheless in response to the demand from the public and not our idea of what dancing should be. Incidentally, the exceptional dance was our true and tried friend financially, because those were the dances that people paid us most to learn.

From one of these dances — the Castle Walk — we received a great deal of compensation, both in reputation and in money. People wanted to learn it. The dance that became a furor was an accident in the beginning. One night at Louis Martin's we had danced a good deal and were rather tired. More as a rest than anything else, we fell into a reverse of the usual proceeding. In all dances the weight is thrown down on the foot. For a change we threw the weight up. It is difficult to describe, but easy to do. Elsie Janis, who was sitting at our table, told us when we came back that it was one thing we "couldn't get away with. It was too ridiculous to consider doing again." It wasn't very graceful to be sure, but it did provide a variation and a great deal of amusement. In spite of Miss Janis's discouragement at the outset we did keep up this dance, and in order that there might be something to it we were forced to add to it a little. In our book on modern dancing the Castle Walk was described thus:

"First of all, walk as in the One-Step. Now, raise yourself up slightly on your toes at each step, with the legs a trifle stiff, and breeze along

happily and easily, and you know all there is to know about the Castle Walk. To turn a corner you do not turn your partner round, but keep walking her backward in the same direction, leaning over slightly — just enough to make a graceful turn and keep the balance well — a little like a bicycle rounding a corner. If you like, instead of walking along in a straight line, after you have rounded your corner, you can continue in the same slanting position, which will naturally cause you to go round in a circle. Now continue, and get your circle smaller and smaller until you are walking around almost in one spot, and then straighten up and start off down the room again. It sounds silly and is silly. That is the explanation of its popularity!"

As a favor to Charles Dillingham, Vernon returned to the stage in "The Lady of the Slipper" for a few weeks. He had a small part, for you may well imagine that when Montgomery and Stone and Elsie Janis were given sufficient opportunity for the display of their talents there wasn't much left for Vernon to do. He hated the part and dancing had discouraged him with comic rôles. In this production I did not ap-

pear. As a return for his services Mr. Dillingham urged the late Charles Frohman to cast Vernon for the juvenile rôle in "The Sunshine Girl." This had been played in London by George Grossmith. Frohman was not willing at first to accede, but finally he did so under protest. During rehearsals he and most of the other people were discouraging. I had no part in the play. I appeared solely as a dancing partner for Vernon. When the play reached production it was a success, and I am certain Vernon's work helped greatly, not only in the dancing but in the acting of the leading rôle. Those who saw the London production as well, were agreed that Vernon and Joe Cawthorne were funnier in the fireman scene than Grossmith and the comedian who played it in London.

The dancing craze was on, and Castle House, the first of our ventures, opened. This was really, and is to-day, a school of dancing, but in the early days teas as well as the lessons spread our fame and increased our earning capacity rapidly. There Vernon taught at least six hours a day. I myself never possessed either the knack or patience for teaching. He was remarkably

From a photograph by Ira L. Hill.

The Castle polka.

Others have said . . . that in the evolution of the modern dance Vernon played a great part.

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clever, in that he could always lead even a beginner into any steps he wanted to do and show them off to great advantage. I have seen him dance with a total stranger and make her appear so graceful and easy at dancing that every one would comment upon it, when he often confided to me afterward that the woman really couldn't dance at all and that he had dragged her round.

Quite another side of his teaching is revealed in a letter from the Aviation Field of France:

"The officers here have been making me teach them the Fox-Trot, etc., and now every evening they have dances and dance with one another. At any other time it would seem terrible to see two men dancing together, but when you know that every one of them is a *real man* and faces death pretty nearly every day, it doesn't seem at all out of place that they should dance, and they welcome me as a Godsend."

Another of our ventures and one in which we were most interested was Sans Souci, a restaurant of our own. The head waiter at Martin's joined us in this. We had a T-shaped room down under the sidewalk at 42d Street and Broadway. The

opening night was quite brilliant. People who do not commonly go out to supper came to Sans Souci. In Paris we had become accustomed to dancing on linoleum and we introduced that floor-covering here, where it had never been used before for a dancing-floor. It met with great success. "Castles in the Air" was a dancing and supper place where we appeared every evening and on matinée days at tea-time. We were not directly concerned with the management. "Castles by the Sea" at Long Beach was named for us, and we frequently danced there in the evening, motoring over from our country place at Manhasset.

It was while Sans Souci was running that Vernon, with his usual enthusiasm for the new, took up drumming. Buddie, the drummer in our orchestra, trained him so well that by the following winter his drumming was as good as that of most professionals, but with a personality and character that most of them lacked. He threw his arms round in the air and made comic faces to the delight of every one in the room. He could throw his sticks high into the air and catch them in time to hit the beat. His sense of rhythm was

From a photograph by Apeda.

A favorite pastime.

His drumming was as good as that of most professionals, but with a personality and character that most of them lacked.

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remarkable, and he could make a drum speak. He had sets of drums and traps in England, in France, at his camp, and at home, and his greatest amusement was to start a graphophone or electric piano and beat the drum as an accompaniment, practising very hard at rolls and inventing new stunts with the sticks.

In camp entertainments he was often called upon to drum as well as to dance. Of one of these he wrote:

"The concert last night was a big success, and my drum-playing seemed to be the hit of the evening. The men had never seen anything like it, and they wouldn't let me stop. I enjoyed it more than they did. I simply love to play the drum and I don't get much opportunity now."

Drumming is all very well in a restaurant or on the stage or in an aviation camp, but in a house, beginning almost before breakfast and ending some time after midnight, it becomes a little trying. I can remember often imploring him to take up something quieter. But his taste for drums was one he never lost and the night before his fatal accident he was playing his Victor and amusing several of the boys at Camp Bembrook,

Texas, with his drums. Theatregoers may remember his drumming in "Watch Your Step." It was a source of great interest to all of the company who watched him intently for new tricks each evening, or applauded his clever recovery when he missed a stick in the air. His drums are now put away as among my dearest souvenirs, like the toys of the Little Boy Blue.

"The Castles are coming — Hooray! Hooray!" appeared on the bill-boards in thirty-five cities during the course of four weeks. This was the Castle Whirlwind Tour. Most of the time we played two cities in a day — matinée in Rochester and an evening in Buffalo, etc. We carried our own orchestra of colored musicians. We took them to Deauville on one occasion, and we had them with us in London later. Jim Europe, whose band is now in France with the 15th New York Regiment, was with us on the Castle Whirlwind Tour.

The entertainment began with some exhibition dancing — Lulu Fada, Furlano, Pavanne, Polka, and Hesitation. Then we danced three modern dances — the Tango, the Maxixe, and the One-Step. This was in the days before the Fox-Trot.

An incident of the whirlwind tour.

Indians preparing to dance before Mrs. Foote, Mrs. Castle, and Vernon Castle (standing).

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During the course of the evening Vernon gave a talk on dancing, urging our constant cry, "simplification." It all ended with a contest for the Castle cup by local dancers. The winners were always those who danced smoothly and with the least effort. Vernon always begged them to leave out all fancy steps and tricks. Often there was the keenest rivalry, and at the finish of the tour in Madison Square Garden, New York, the contest was long and almost impossible to decide. Here not only the New York dancers appeared but the winners of the out-of-town contests as well. The prize was finally awarded to Mr. and Mrs. Selig Baruch (brother and sister-in-law of Bernard Baruch).

One of the things that made this circus travelling a lot more endurable was the nightly courts held in the private car in which the musicians travelled. One night we found great merriment going on in their car. We learned that one of the musicians was sentenced for wearing brown shoes with his evening clothes in the orchestra pit. These trials were conducted in dead seriousness and offenders were served with a summons some time during the day to appear in court at night.

They were allowed to plead their own cases or to have counsel appear for them. For punishment sometimes the court ordered the culprit to provide refreshments for the next night. As we became nightly attendants, charges were brought against us for missteps, etc., and our fines were consequently heavier. The court would order us to pay in champagne instead of beer and sandwiches. One night our secretary, who had a shade too many cocktails to his credit, was summoned. He was a brilliant speaker, a man with an unlimited vocabulary and great charm, and we were delighted when he said he would plead his own case. We had him arrested because we knew how amusingly serious he would be. With a great force he laid before us the fatal results of having such a charge brought against him; he pointed out that such a stigma would follow him all the days of his life, etc. After at least half an hour of his eloquence, the judge proclaimed that his case would not be recorded if he could clear the charge by saying that line from "The Sunshine Girl": "She stood at the gate welcoming him in." (It reads simple, but try to say it.) Of course poor Gladwyn hopelessly muffed it, and

after his splendid defense, fell down completely. We all shrieked with laughter, and the court broke up.

When we were living at Manhasset, Vernon took up polo and the showing of German shepherd dogs. He played polo with his wonted enthusiasm and fearlessness. He liked all games except cricket, of which he complains in one of his letters from the training-camp in England. Cricket he thought a shade worse than baseball. He never became a remarkable polo-player, but he loved the game and spent a great deal of time on his ponies. His kennels of police dogs gained some reputation, but these, with the exception of Tell von Flügerad, his very famous winner of all field trials, were sold when he gave up his profession to go to war. He adored Tell and thought of taking him with him, but he feared that something might happen to him and that there would be no one to care for Tell out there if it did. It was one of his greatest joys on being sent to Canada as an instructor to the Royal Flying Corps that he could have Tell with him again. Jeffry, his monkey, he also had in Canada, and a little paroquet I had given him because he had

taken such a fancy to him on one of his visits home. No one ever showed the patience Vernon did in travelling back and forth with his family of pets. He wasn't embarrassed at carrying huge cages through railway stations, and spent most of his time en route in the baggage-car.

Our Manhasset home was used for the taking of many of the scenes in our movie, "The Whirl of Life." Vernon wrote the scenario for this and in the main it followed our lives, that is to say, until the villains entered and kidnapped me. I believe there was another variation in that in the film we were supposed to have eloped. During the taking of this movie an amusing incident occurred which caused the wastage of some feet of film. We had been sensationally rescued from the sea and our picture audience was supposed to be waiting for our appearance. I was in my dressing-room in the hands of my maid, who was a chocolate brown. Vernon was supposed to rush in greatly agitated by the impatience of the audience to ask me if I was ready. The camera was grinding and in he dashed, but, instead of taking up his cue and saying what he had rehearsed, he exclaimed to my maid: "Why, Mary, your make-

From a photograph by Le Man.

Vernon Castle and his pony Blackie at Manhassett, 1915.

He never became a remarkable polo-player, but he loved the game and spent a great deal of time on his ponies.

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up's too dark." Of course the scene had to be done over.

During these days that we were living at Manhasset it was difficult to get him home. He was always galloping around somewhere, playing polo or tennis with never a care in the world or a thought for the future. To me his extravagance and care-free manner were always a source of worry. But he was so charmingly irresponsible and so amusing that I easily forgot my annoyance. I can see him now crawling to the front door of the Manhasset house on his hands and knees (because the top of it was glass) to peek underneath or through the keyhole to see who had come to call before letting them know he was in.

Our best work upon the stage was done in "Watch Your Step." This was a big musical comedy of the extravaganza type with interesting music by Irving Berlin, now a soldier too. The whole production is too recent for me to go into now. We both danced and played parts as well. From France Vernon wrote: "There is a gramophone here playing all of the 'Watch Your Step' music and it makes me so homesick." Then

again: "There is an awful row going on. The continual thunder of guns outside and the more frightful singing of the officers inside. They sing anything from 'Pagliacci' to 'Michigan.' The favorite song seems to be 'The Simple Melody' from 'Watch Your Step.' They didn't know how the rag part went until I showed them and now I realize I've made one of the biggest mistakes of the war! Every night they take sides and sing on one side 'Play a Simple Melody,' etc., and on the other 'Oh, You Musical Demon,' with the pianist playing an entirely different tune. It would all make an Indian uprising sound like real music."

We played "Watch Your Step" during most of one season, from November to June, I believe. In the autumn we went on the road with the show, playing in Chicago and in Boston, and in Chicago appearing at Rector's after the play.

After mid-December Vernon left the show to study aviation at Newport News, Va. There he received his pilot's license. I continued a lonely participation in "Watch Your Step."

Before Vernon sailed for England and while I was still playing on the road, we gave two fare-

From a photograph by Ira L. Hill.

As they appeared in "Watch Your Step."

In returning to America we found that the public was just becoming interested in cabarets and the modern dances, so-called.

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well performances at the Hippodrome on two successive Sunday nights, and a description of the first will suffice, for they were much alike. The second was given merely because all the people who wished to attend could not get into the first, and on one occasion over three hundred people were seated on the stage at the last minute. I am told that these performances established the record attendance for the Hippodrome up to that time. Sousa's band played our music for us and we did about four dances. Our reception was enormous and so unexpected for both of us that we were truly excited. It was the largest audience we had ever danced before, and as most of them had come to the theatre just to see us they were most appreciative. At the end of our dancing we had to come back and back to bow our gratitude. We were so happy that we nearly cried for joy, and the crowd that awaited us outside the stage-door was still more touching. They waved and called to us as we drove away. I shall never forget the pride we felt. To the performer an eager, appreciative crowd is a source of delight and joy that has no counterpart for laymen. The exhilaration of the last performance, even though

repeated, is something vastly different from any other joy that comes to professionals, and it was nice to know that the people in New York were going to miss our dancing and had turned out so eagerly to see us for the last time. On each of these occasions I had come back home on a special train from the Middle West to dance for an hour on Sunday night, and then fly back to Pittsburg or Cincinnati for Monday night's performance of "Watch Your Step." Almost before the applause had ceased I would be on my train starting back, feeling that I had been dancing in the clouds and had just come back to earth. It always seemed like a happy dream afterward. The Hippodrome was the scene of another farewell — our last exhibition together in America. It was at a British recruiting performance a year later.

There was one other time when we danced together that was in the nature of a farewell. While Vernon was still at Newport News and before he had received his pilot's license, he came out to Indianapolis, where "Watch Your Step" was playing, to say good-by to me. On the last night of the run there he was sitting in a box

watching the show, and Frank Tinney pulled him up onto the stage. The audience was so insistent that we agreed to dance. It was hard to dance with any sort of spirit. For me there was the apprehension of the farewell in St. Louis the next day, and a sort of gloom had settled all over the company. They all had liked Vernon so much, and his reappearance made them feel more keenly how much he was missed in the show. I had to swallow hard to keep on smiling as they played the One-Step we had danced to so often and so happily months and months before. Each step brought us nearer to the end, and I hated to take them. I wanted to linger on them lovingly, knowing they might not come again.

The enthusiasm of the company was as great as that of the audience and there was a hushed attention on the part of every one, that had never been quite the same before. After a great deal of applause Vernon thanked everybody and said good-by. The company crowded around him and cheered as the curtain fell. He put his arm around me and stood there very embarrassed at their sincere devotion. He was always modest and shy to a tremendous degree, and every outburst

of admiration both surprised and embarrassed him.

The next day was for me the blackest day I can remember, save one. I was proud, naturally, to have him go and glad he wanted to go. I wouldn't have had him different even at the price I have had to pay. How true is the line of Lovelace's: "I could not love thee, dear, so much, loved I not honor more." Vernon was courageous, self-sacrificing, and noble. He could not have been different when the big test came. It wasn't easy for him to change suddenly from a sensitive, tender-hearted, care-free child (as he always seemed to me) into a stern soldier. And he sometimes became bored with it all, as he showed when he wrote from France: "I want to come to you so badly. I'm tired of being a soldier. I'd rather be a postman now."

But he could not have been different, I repeat, when the test came, and so I was brave or tried to be. I smiled because I knew he wanted me to and I had to help him to be brave. We drove to the station in St. Louis one cold, wet Monday morning — it wasn't yet time for the train, so we waited in the little side street, for we did not

From a photograph by Haas.

Mr. and Mrs. Castle on the piazza of their country house at Manhassett, L. I., with Kiki and Tell.

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wish people to see our parting. It was too hard and neither of us went through it as we had promised ourselves we should. He was gone and that night in St. Louis I gave the worst performance of my life. I mention this, not because of its importance, but that I may justify myself with the people who may have seen me on that particular night.

Shortly thereafter Vernon sailed for England and I, hopelessly lost and lonely, went on working. I had comfort in the tremendous pride I felt in him.

CHAPTER IV

IN May, 1916, as soon as I was released from my work in "Watch Your Step" I hastened to England to see Vernon before he was sent with his squadron to France. I was scheduled to be back by the end of the month to start work on a new moving picture, so I booked a round trip on the *St. Louis*, which allowed me six days in England — just six short days. We were nearing the landing and I had gone to my cabin to put on one of those last touches that I might look my best, when one of my fellow passengers tapped on my window and told me that Vernon was outside. I raced for the deck and there below me on a tender he stood. It was my first glimpse of him as a soldier, and it is one which I shall always carry with me. He had received his "wings" that morning and I am sure no one could have looked smarter or prouder.

We both waved frantically and conspicuously and jumped up and down with impatience. When the gang-plank between the two boats was lowered he tore across it and into my arms. Those

were proud moments for me, I can tell you! He had jumped aboard the tender just as it was pulling off. As his air was very businesslike and he wore a uniform, no one questioned him, though except on official business it is impossible to meet the liners. If any one had had a mind to question his errand after he met the *St. Louis* I am sure that our happy meeting and the joy in our faces would have led them to condone his fault, if it were one. How lucky we were! All day long we waited just off the dock, not allowed to go ashore. The other poor passengers could only wave weakly at their friends and relatives on the pier below. It was a very trying day for most on board. There were many Canadian women taking over sweet little children to see their daddies — perhaps for the last time. One very charming little girl had taken a great interest in my monkey Rastus. When I told her that Rastus was going over to see his daddy, too, she was much impressed and demanded to know whether or not his daddy looked most like us or most like a monkey. I jestingly had told her that he was sort of between the two and that she would soon see for herself. When I pointed him out to her, she didn't

seem disappointed, for Vernon's aviation cap was rather like a monkey's cap and worn in a decided monkey fashion.

The day after my arrival in England we danced at a benefit performance given at the Drury Lane Theatre before Queen Alexandra. Both Vernon and I were very nervous about this performance, for we had not danced together for more than six months. Fortunately, we found in London the colored orchestra that we had taken abroad with us several years before. This relieved our anxiety tremendously, for we were so accustomed to the music of negro musicians and they understand dance music thoroughly. We never got a chance to rehearse on the stage, as it was occupied by other acts that needed rehearsals more than we did. All we had time to do was to hum over a few tunes to our colored friends of the orchestra and to instruct them to watch and follow us closely. They were accustomed to doing this, and that part of our work was easy. I wore a black-chiffon dress that was in no way unusual. I did wear, however, something conspicuous — a diamond anklet. Vernon wore his dress clothes, as he was not allowed to dance in uniform. We

From a photograph, copyright by Moffett, Chicago.

Vernon Castle and Rastus, the monkey, Chicago, 1915.

"I don't think there is a monkey in the world that could beat that boy Rastus."

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waited back stage what seemed hours and hours until our coons struck up one of our old favorites. Hearing that music in a theatre again took us back several years and the encouraging and admiring faces of our colored friends — they were seated on the stage — gave us an added confidence. We forgot the crowded audience that filled the house everywhere. We forgot even the Queen mother and danced as we had never danced before. Our nervousness disappeared completely and as we danced the almost forgotten steps, the general rotation of our numbers came back to us as naturally as if we had never ceased continuous dancing. It was glorious! Our hearts sang at the memory that surged up within us, and when we finished we came back and back to bow first to the audience and then to the Queen mother, who was smiling sweetly and even applauding. Surely this must have been the beautiful dream or the fairy-story of two dancers come true. We didn't know whether to be happy or cry. This was praise for work well done together. We had climbed the ladder so patiently side by side.

Then came three happy days in London, filled

with theatres, dinners, and parties. We danced every night till early morning to get our fill, knowing full well the months would be long and weary before we could know such happiness again. Always there hung over us the time of our parting, the time when my six days would be over. We didn't speak of it, but each knew that the other thought of it. The day before I sailed we went to Peussy. Vernon had to report there and wait till he was sent overseas. It is the sleepiest and quaintest of little villages. We stopped at an old tavern where they lit log-fires and tried in so many ways to make us comfortable. I'd have liked to stay forever, but I had to pose and act before the camera in far-away America before the end of that month, and any minute might bring Vernon his orders which would take him to France.

Our last dinner in that little town was a painful, silent affair. My tears could not be kept back, and Vernon worked very hard at serving nothing. Our few attempts to jest fell hopelessly flat. We knew then what war meant, what it was meaning to thousands of families, what suffering and sacrifice there is, wholly apart from that on

the battle-field. In the gray of early morning we went to the station, having promised ourselves as we did that day in St. Louis months before, not to cry or to say good-by. Swallowing hard, I waved feebly out of the window as the train moved away from the platform, leaving him standing at salute — every bit a soldier. Once out of sight, I sobbed to my heart's content, and as the fields and hills rolled by hazily I wrote the following little prayer for him. It's poor, I know, but I quote it because he wore it tied around his neck with a dirty little string for the next nine months. With him it went over the front, again and again, at Ypres and Bailleul.

"Almighty God, if thou art there,
Listen to my humble prayer
And keep him safe.

Keep him in your care alway—
Watch o'er him thro this weary day
And keep him safe.

Make him feel my love and sorrow,
Bring him back some near to-morrow—
And keep him safe."

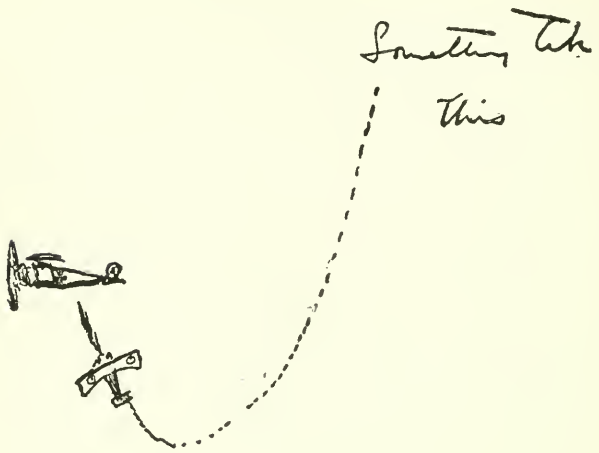
Shortly after my leaving England, Vernon was sent to the front with his squadron. He

soon got into the thick of things. His interest in flying and the work he was doing was never so absorbing that he forgot to write letters home or to take an interest in our pets or the other things that had so delighted him. His love of the theatre and of dancing he kept, for night after night he appeared at barracks or other entertainments. His love of sport and games was always with him. As an entertainer he acquired added reputation and prestige in the service, and he was most popular. He thought of a thousand and one things to do for the men at the front. He sent home for many things that would make life easier or pleasanter for some one. On arriving in France he found that there were many Americans with the Canadian aviators. For them he sent home to me for American magazines and papers, as at that time little home news that would interest them penetrated to their section. When he was mess president (I believe that is the term that he used in his letters) he found many ways to amuse the men and to lighten the monotony of a branch of the service which may only require a few hours' work a day. I do not wish, however, to give the impression

that he was entertainer at war, following his own pursuits or his trade. He went about the serious business of war good-naturedly and with a big spirit. He was interested not only in what he himself did, but in what his comrades accomplished. In one of his early letters from France he wrote:

"I've really had quite an exciting morning. I was flying very low, about 4,000 feet, when I saw a Hun machine about 10,000 feet up, and just over our lines. I don't think he saw me, or if he did he didn't give me a thought because I was so low. However, I thought I had better start climbing, and if I could get above him I might have a chance to bring him down. I climbed. My machine was not the fastest we have, so it was very slow work, and all the while the German was going round in big circles just over our trenches. When I was about 7,000 feet and the Hun still about 10,000, I looked up. Another machine diving down from about 17,000, came into view. At that distance I couldn't see whether it was one of ours or theirs. When it got closer, I discovered it was one of our fastest scouts and that he was coming at terrific speed.

He dived right under the unsuspecting Hun and pointed his machine up and opened fire



"Well, the bullets must have gone into the gasolene-tank, because with a big explosion, the German machine burst into flames and went crashing to the ground. The poor pilot (I really felt sorry for him) jumped out long before the machine touched the ground, but of course there was nothing left of him when he hit.

"Our pilot who did the job was so excited, and really it was a splendid piece of work."

I had promised Vernon to return on the completion of my serial picture in October, but the

movie dragged on and it was not until early January, having rushed east from California with just time to make the boat, that I was able to set out once more for England. The trip was stormy, cold, and miserable, but as we neared Liverpool my spirits soared, and I began eagerly searching the faces of those waiting on the pier. A dozen times I thought I saw Vernon among the British officers who were there, but each time, with sinking heart, I found I was mistaken. I was handed some cables and searched rapidly among them for some word of welcome, but there was none. There is nothing so lonely in all the world as watching the joyous meetings of others. Every one on the boat except me had some one to wave to or call to them excitedly. I had the fear that something had happened to him and they had not dared to tell me. All the way from Liverpool to London I pictured him wounded or dead, and made myself thoroughly miserable.

On arriving in London I found that his leave had been postponed, but that he would probably be over from France in a week or ten days. Finally I got a wire that he was flying across the Channel the same day. In the late afternoon he

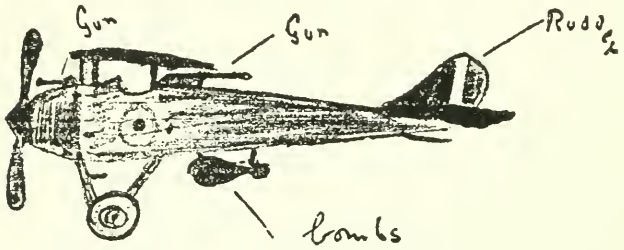
arrived, wrapped in a leather coat and many mufflers. From the inside of his coat peeped the comic little face of a monkey, which was his mascot at the front. Vernon picked him up in Paris at a Red Cross bazaar. No one else wanted to buy him, and he had looked so pathetic — Vernon could never resist such an appeal. Of course they became the best of friends, and this particular monkey acquired quite a reputation as a flier in Vernon's squadron. He had named him "Hallad," after a song Bert Williams sung, and had dressed him in a little khaki soldier suit. Hallad held the long-distance-flight record for monkeys, having flown from Paris to Bailleul, where Vernon's squadron was stationed. He had taught him to do a somersault and many little bright tricks. It was hard to say whose love was strongest — each for each — Vernon's or Hallad's. Vernon's every thought was for "his boy," and Hallad cried pitifully every time he went out and left him. One of the funniest things he did was to try and make Vernon go to bed promptly. As soon as he came in at night Hallad would jump up and down on the bed and cry, running in under the covers and out again,

until Vernon would get into bed; then Hallad would snuggle in on his chest and grumble and grunt and talk to himself with contentment until he fell off to sleep. His death was a sad loss, and Vernon wrote me after he got back to France of how he missed Hallad, and what sorrow it had awakened in his heart to find all his little things about his shack.

On this visit my husband told me much of his work flying over the German lines. He told me of some of the experiences he had had while bombing, but one of his letters describes this better than I can do:

"I had to get up at 3.30 so that I could fly and drop some bombs on a railroad before it got too light. It wasn't a very nice morning, but I went up, and then it came over very cloudy, and I got lost in the clouds. I couldn't see a speck of ground, so after flying a bit I shut off the engine and dived down, but on coming out through the clouds I was immediately shelled. Having no idea where I was except that I was *not* over a friendly country, I climbed back into the clouds again. I decided that I had been flying for about twenty-five minutes, so I pointed my

machine due west and flew for about thirty-five minutes. When I came down again, by a great stroke of luck, I was almost over our own aerodrome. I landed, but not without a great deal of fear, because I still had under the machine the bombs that I was supposed to drop on the railroad.



I enclose a sketch showing you the position of the bombs, and as they are exploded by contact, you will see that it was no fun landing with them. This concludes my little story."

"Lieutenant Castle will give more of his experiences in the next issue," as he put it.

It was while I was on this same visit that Vernon was made very happy and proud on receiving a telegram informing him that he had been awarded the Croix de Guerre.

I remember with what childish enthusiasm he

flew out and bought one of the medals and many bits of red-and-green-striped ribbon for me to sew on all of his uniforms. He had received it for bravery shown in numerous flights over the German lines and his fearlessness in attacking and bringing down enemy planes. He always delighted in talking of his first flight over the German lines.

He had been commanded to take twenty-four pictures of the enemy trenches. Now, picture-taking is the job most dreaded by the fliers, and therefore always given to men on their arrival at the front to test their nerve and to prepare them for the worst, for the worst it is. They are bound to fly low enough to be within range of the anti-aircraft guns all the time, and the pictures themselves would be difficult enough to get, even under the calmest and most ordinary circumstances. The flier is given a pin-point on a little map with the instructions that that is to be the centre of the picture, and bounded on all four sides by objects which are described. What the aviator has to do is to keep his camera straight, the central object in focus, and to fly his machine under the very trying conditions which the Germans

provide. It is not an easy matter, as Vernon soon learned. He was much concerned and distracted by the bursting shells. One would go off right in front of him, and he would lose track of the pin-point that he was to photograph. Another went off carelessly near the tail of his machine, and in looking around to see what harm had been done the machine would become tilted a little sideways. In order to prevent the guns below from getting a direct range, he zigzagged and flew all around the country between each picture. He was very shaky about it all and not a little distressed, but finally he got what he thought he had been sent out for, and flew home radiant with the satisfaction of a job well done.

The next morning his commanding officer sent for him and said: "Castle, did you take these pictures?" Vernon saluted him in true soldier fashion, and said, "Yes, sir," with great pride in his voice, expecting to have something pinned on his chest. Then to his surprise and disappointment, the commanding officer tore up the pictures and told Vernon they were hopelessly out of focus, crooked, and worthless. He used rather strong language and left no doubt in Vernon's mind

about the failure of his little expedition over the German lines.

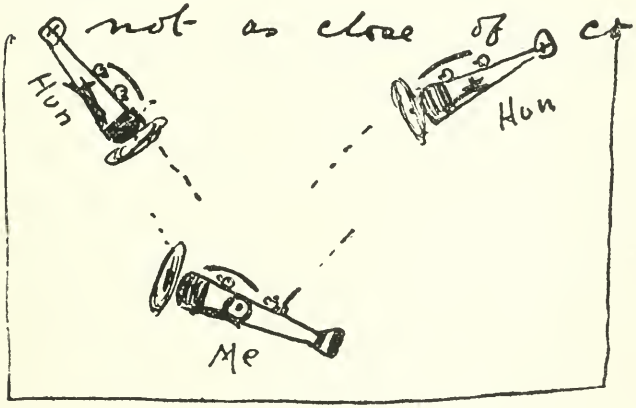
Then he demanded to know why Vernon hadn't done better. By this time Vernon, thoroughly humble, explained that they (meaning the Boches) had been firing on him pretty heavily, and that he had been forced to abandon his course very often because of the bursting shells. This, it seems, was the worst thing he could have said. His squadron commander was a man of boundless courage. He knew no fear; he had attracted a great deal of attention because of his bravery in flying, and he had only contempt for those who admitted the slightest fear. All this Vernon learned afterward from his fellow fliers. He told me that he felt much like a child who, having been severely punished, hopes to be run over in the street so that his parents may feel truly sorry for their cruel, harsh treatment. He got into his machine very hurt and angry, but determined that he should not be sneered at a second time; and so flying low in a straight line over the German front, and never wavering from his course (though on such missions the flier is supposed to circle around after each picture to make it more

difficult for the gunners below), he took his twenty-four pictures all over again. Flying bits of shell tore holes in the planes of his machine, one bit went through the collar of his coat, and finally his rudder was so badly ripped away that he had great difficulty in landing. I doubt if on this trip he ever heard the guns booming, for his mind was so determined and his heart so wounded. When he landed his machine told the story, and the splendid pictures he turned in were proof of his courage. The prettiest part of this little story is that his commanding officer and he became fast friends from then on. It was he who finally sent Vernon to Canada after he had had a bad fall in France, for fear something might happen to him.

That was Vernon's first flight over the German lines. Of his first fight with a Hun, he wrote:

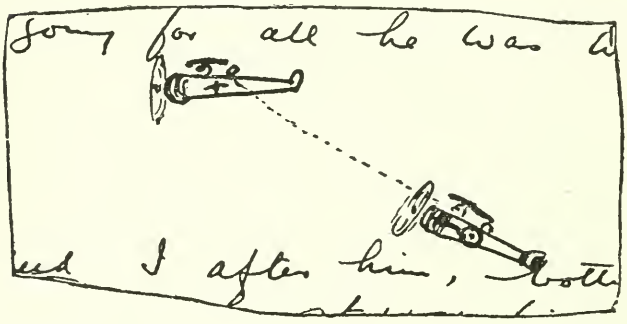
"It was a terribly cold day, and I was detailed to go up on a patrol. I had just got into my machine and started up the engine when I suddenly realized I hadn't my little prayer around my neck. Of course I am far too superstitious to go up without it, so I stopped my engine, got out of the machine, and went to my hut where I found it. I was too bundled up and had no time

to undress, so I tied it round my wrist. Well, I got up in the air about 10,000 feet when I suddenly spotted four Huns. Then I was glad I had gone back for my prayer, because I thought to myself: 'Here's where I get it.' I beetled off after the Huns, who were well over our side of the lines and only a few miles from the aerodrome. I gradually caught them up, and when they saw me the two behind turned on me, and as they were higher, they started to dive at me, one from the front and the other from the back, like this:



not as close of course as in this drawing of mine. My observer opened fire at the one diving at the back and apparently frightened him away or

wounded him, because he beat it. The Hun in front of me had me cold, really, because I couldn't tilt my machine up enough to get range on him, but I fired my gun anyway, and he like a fool turned off, which gave me the opportunity I wanted, which was to get under his tail. Now we were like this:



He was going for all he was worth for Hunland, I after him, both blazing away. Presently he stopped firing, and I guess I must have either hit the observer, or his gun just jammed. Then the Hun pilot tried to turn and shake me off his tail, but he couldn't, and every time I could get the light on him I blazed away. By this time we were across the lines on his side, and the Hun Archies were firing at me, but I was so darned

excited that I didn't notice anything. Well, we kept on for some time when suddenly his machine tipped over sideways and downward, and then started spinning like a top. I knew I had hit him. He fell right through some clouds, and I lost sight of him forever.

"When I came home I reported it, but of course as I didn't actually see him hit the ground, I couldn't very well claim him as a certainty; but while I was at lunch one of our pilots who was working with the artillery in that vicinity said he saw the machine come through the clouds and crash into the ground. So after it was verified I got full credit for it. It was very exciting because all the chaps on the aerodrome could see the fight. I don't like killing things, as you know, but I certainly *saw red* that time. Gee, I was excited."

CHAPTER V

AFTER a bad fall in France Vernon was sent to Camp Mohawk, Deseronto, Canada, as an instructor in the Royal Flying Corps. The fall in France was about one thousand feet, but the machine landed in some barbed-wire entanglements, which held it. He received only some slight scratches on his face. During his instructing days in Canada he and one of his pupils, Cadet A. W. Fraser, who was flying the machine from the front seat, fell about five hundred feet onto the roof of a hangar, where the nose of the machine jammed and stuck. They had just started up when the cadet lost control, and there was not time for Vernon to right the machine before they struck the roof. While still in the air he tried to move the levers, but his pupil, probably through fright, held them rigid, and the fall could not be averted. The wings of the broken machine closed round the cadet in the front seat, and Vernon believed that he was unconscious when they struck the roof, for he could get no answer from him. Unstrapping himself, Vernon stepped upon the roof

and tried to get the boy's body out, but just then the gasolene-tank exploded and the entire machine fell through the roof in a mass of flames. Some of the officers who were there at the time have told me that it was necessary to hold Vernon back, as he was determined to save his student. He was so unstrung by the accident that he was sent home for a short leave. When he went back to instructing again he always sat in the front seat.

In this unsentimental business of war the instructor, whose life is supposed for military purposes to be worth more than that of the student he is teaching, is expected to occupy the second or safer seat. Time and again in aeroplane accidents, the man in front is killed and the man in the second seat only slightly injured, and often not at all. The engine, being the heaviest part of the machine, reaches the ground first and usually burrows into it when a plane falls. But Vernon wished to give his pupils the greater confidence, and until his last flight — he was killed while riding in the front seat — he always followed and held to the determination he formed that day at Camp Mohawk, when his pupil was killed.

Vernon did not particularly enjoy the work of an instructor. It enabled him to be near home, and he could have his dogs and his monkey Jeffry with him, but the job really worried him and gave him more cares and responsibility than he had had at the front. Then too the rush of an aviation camp is very great. Modern warfare demands so many fliers, and they must be turned out quickly. When Vernon was at Camp Mohawk he was supposed to turn out forty students a month. As the personnel was for one reason or another changing constantly, many more than forty would come under his instruction during the course of a month.

With the 84th Royal Flying Corps Squadron Vernon, along with Lord Wellesley, went to Benbrook Field, near Fort Worth, Texas. This was to be the winter quarters of the Flying Corps. Here his work as an instructor went on. And here he gained in popularity with the men. Aviators down there have told me that he was by far the most popular of the flight commanders. He was always considerate for the men. He knew, as few others did, that the life of an aviation cadet is a disagreeable one, and he was always willing

to give his services as an entertainer and to lighten the routine of the camp. If the wife of a student aviator was coming to Fort Worth, it was Captain Castle who went to meet her in his car, because the student could not get leave. He knew no fear, and the men knew that he would not ask them to do things that he would not gladly do himself.

His stunt flying was the admiration of every one at Camp Benbrook. Every evening at sunset he would fly eight thousand feet up, and his plane, silhouetted against the sky — at times barely visible — had a grace and a rhythm which few other fliers seemed to acquire. It was said that when he was in the air flying alone, none on the ground need ask who was up. With all the brilliancy of his own flying, he was a good instructor. He tried at the earliest moment to interest and encourage his pupil. At times he would be discouraging and tell the student that he could never fly, and that he had better go into the infantry or the tank service. Of course after that the boy tried his best to please the instructor. In the air he was never quick, as some instructors are said to be, to take the control

away from the student. He was there himself to give all and to risk all.

Among his students were men who learned to fly quickly, and men who could be trusted in the air alone after they had had a few lessons in the discouraging encouragement with which he began his instruction.

The boys who go into aviation are so anxious to learn and so eager to be up in the air that time hangs rather heavily upon their hands. Thus it is that the life of the cadet is rather a miserable one. There are never in these days, when fliers must be turned out quickly and in great numbers, enough planes for the individual to get much time each day in the air. Hence Vernon's ability to entertain was often requisitioned. He thought up many skits and sketches.

Here is one of the parodies he wrote on "Me and My Gal":

"What a beautiful day
To go flying away!
But Instructors don't care
To take us in the air.
No one cares about me—
All I get is C. B.
So I'm here with my broom,
Sweeping out the damned room.

The C. O.'s waiting
For me and my Pal
There's congregating
For me and my Pal
And I'd just like to mention
It may be his intention
Just to give me detention
'Cause I danced with his gal.

It's no use trying, with me and my Pal
They won't teach flying to me and my Pal
But some day they'll build
A little grave for two or
Three or four or more
At Benbrook, for me and my Pal."

He wrote parodies of popular songs, and always his aim was to depict the flight of the cadet. Before he started he had his audience with him. In all these entertainments he elected to play the part of the cadet himself. Never when he appeared before the men did he wear the insignia of an officer. I refer, of course, to the times when he was a performer, not an instructor. Often he went outside the camp to appear at charity, Red Cross or Loan Drive performances. Around Fort Worth he and his motor-cars were familiar figures.

Small wonder, then, that the day he died and the first Sunday after, were complete "washouts" at Camp Benbrook. In aviation parlance a washout is a day on which planes are not sent up.

That there were two washouts occasioned by Vernon's death was a beautiful tribute to him, for in this unsentimental business of war, where so many fliers must be trained, a washout is a rarity.

Besides the greater chance of fatality in riding in the front seat of an aeroplane, there is another disadvantage in that it is more difficult to see. On that day in mid-February, Vernon and a pupil, an American student who had enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps, were just about to land. Just a few feet ahead of them another training plane rose rapidly. Vernon undertook what is known as an Immelmann turn. It is, I believe, a combination turn and twist, and named after Lieutenant Immelmann, a German aviator, who was himself brought down in France. Vernon's plane was only fifty feet from the ground, and either it failed to respond, or because of the nearness to the ground, there was not room to make so difficult a manœuvre. In any event, it crashed nose downward, and Vernon was killed.

Those who saw this last flight of Captain Castle seem convinced that it was a beautiful attempt to do that which was almost impossible. Also they agree that so clever and experienced a

flier must have felt sure that he could not make the turn in safety. It showed beautiful and quick-witted management of a plane. The student was unharmed and Vernon paid unhesitatingly with his life. His death was instantaneous, and in death he was practically unmarred. His fellow officers lifted him out of the ruined plane, and the camp mourned and paid tribute to one who was missed and praised, and whose cleverness was so much admired.

The next day his casket, wrapped in flags and resting on a gun-carriage, was drawn to the station at Fort Worth, while, with muffled drums and reversed arms, his brothers, officers and men, marched in saddened silence. As the train drew away Victor Dodd, his devoted servant, who had joined the Royal Flying Corps to be near him, stood at attention, alone at the end of the platform until the last coach disappeared from sight. As he wrote me: "So passed for the last time one I had loved in life and love in death. I will miss him here, God grant I meet him there."

And little Jeffry, Vernon's favorite pet, listening to each footstep, waited for him to come back to his quarters.

Hundreds of letters, telegrams, and messages

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of sympathy reached me. The public and many prominent persons were eager to pay tribute to him.

> "He was a man, take him for all in all
> I shall not look upon his like again."

Few careers have, from the point of view of those who had them, been so contented and happy. Vernon enjoyed life, and he made others happy by his deeds and his thoughtfulness. As a professional performer he was one who never lost the enthusiasm for his work. A night in the theatre was never a chore. In entertaining people he was himself entertained. He greatly influenced modern dancing; he taught many people and all the time he never lost the freshness and enthusiasm of those days when we won our first success in Paris. I'd like to quote from an editorial comment in the *Christian Science Monitor*. This appeared shortly after Vernon's death at Camp Benbrook, and though it contains some praise for me as well as for Vernon, I think I may be pardoned for inserting it here:

"The Castles showed and taught people of two continents how modern dances ought to be danced.

They eliminated vulgarity and replaced it with refinement. They restored poetry to motion. Multitudes of people who had no time to waste upon ordinary dancing, as participants or spectators, took kindly, and even enthusiastically, to their dancing exhibitions and instructions. Little by little the Castles changed the atmosphere of the dance-hall. Little by little, too, they made it possible for discriminating people to witness, with some degree of pleasure, stage and screen dancing. Unconsciously, perhaps, because with all their popularity and success they remained as modest as they were unaffected, the two achieved a notable social reform. Dancing was running down to the depths when they first came upon the scene, and before the war separated them they had reversed the current. The Castles furnished an illustration of the good that may be accomplished in any calling if the effort is rightly and skilfully directed.

"Vernon Castle, when his native country called, threw aside a profession that assured him a larger income than is enjoyed by the President of the United States, and took his place with the colors. His wife, without hesitation, had consented to his

enlistment. He won a captaincy in the Royal Flying Corps, and her pride in him increased. The fact that he was intrusted with the task of teaching aviation proved that he was as capable a flier as he had been a dancer. His final display of heroism, the other day, justified all the admiration that ever went out to him in another calling. It revealed, behind the dancer and the aviator, the man."

The war changed Vernon and many of his ideas. When he first arrived in France he wrote me: "The only things I miss are music and theatres and suppers, and well-dressed women and horses and motors and dogs, etc. We have everything here in the way of dust, guns and aeroplanes." Late in his career as an aviator he wrote: "Oh, I want to get back to you so badly. I shouldn't care if we didn't have a penny. I don't want any extravagant things any more. If the war could only end this winter, but I don't see how it can, and I am here to see it through and to take my chances with the rest."

Though facing danger himself at every turn, he was most consistently and thoughtfully considerate of the work I was doing. He feared to

have me go up in an airplane in motion-picture work. From France he wrote:

"Darling, do be careful in your picture. Falling off a horse while it is running is no easy job, and should be done by a double. And the man who is to take you up in the hydroplane. Who is he? And how much flying has he done? And what is the machine? For God's sake don't go up with some dub, who has only just taken out his pilot's license. Insist, please, darling, on having an experienced pilot who has done at least one hundred hours in the air. You know if anything happened to you through any one's carelessness, I'd come home to shoot him dead. I'm not thinking for a moment of your getting killed, but you might easily be hurt or maimed by those fool picture people who are always trying to get a thrill."

I like, too, another letter that he wrote me from France. It shows thoughtfulness for me, but the greater consideration, at least so it seems to me, for the men:

"I am so excited about your new clothes, sweetheart. I am so awfully, awfully proud of you. I am so glad you bought yourself some pearls.

How I wish that I might have bought them for you. I shall some day, but not this Christmas. I am going to try to give the chaps here as merry a Christmas as I can. I shall get a tree and there will be lights. Will you send me one of those electric sets with colored lamps? Just a small one. A week before Christmas I shall keep back all packages which come by post so that they can't open them till Christmas morning. I shall think of you a lot that day, but I shan't be sad."

Vernon's funeral in New York was at the Little Church Around the Corner — that little haven in Twenty-ninth Street which has been such a solace to the theatrical profession. The streets were lined with people, the windows choked with faces, and the police had to be called upon to keep the street near the church partly cleared. Inside were many of those that Vernon had loved — his friends, people he had taught to dance, professionals with whom he had appeared, chance acquaintances, stage-door keepers, scene-shifters, and waiters in cafés and restaurants. Buddy, the drummer who had taught Vernon to drum, and other colored musicians from our own

restaurant were there, and their simple natures were overcome with grief.

The service was short, solemn, and simple, as he would have wished it. His Royal Flying Corps cap seemed so small as it rested there on his coffin, which was draped in the Union Jack and the Royal Flying Corps flag. Eight men from the corps carried his coffin from the church, and behind it walked British officers, several dear and personal friends, and his brother-in-law, Lawrence Grossmith.

And this, then, was the end of a career which went from acting and dancing to the battle-field, and then cheerfully to the task of instructor in a training-camp. A teacher always, even when a fighter, and a man born to inspire others. Even though at times impatient with the lot of a teacher, whether of dancing or of aviation, he never failed to gain another's confidence and to instil in him the desire to do well the thing in hand. Vernon himself learned quickly and wholeheartedly, whether it was a game, a new step, or a flying turn. His own quickness, however, never caused him to be annoyed at another's stupidity. All of his pupils agree that he was a wonderful in-

structor, and ready and eager to praise and to encourage where praise and encouragement were due.

His was a nature full of sunny contrasts, just as his career was full of dramatic contrasts. When it was all done and the tribute of the thousands had been paid him, he himself in his will, so it seems to me and to many others, revealed a beautiful side of his nature. His will is phrased in human tenderness, unusual, I am told, in such documents. I glory in the affection that it expresses for me. Here is the will in part:

"I, Vernon Castle, of Manhasset, L. I., being of sound mind and mindful of the uncertainty of life, especially in view of the fact that I am about to enlist in the English Army, do declare this to be my last Will and Testament.

"I direct the payment out of my estate of all my just debts and funeral expenses.

"The rest of and residue of property, of whatever kind and wherever situated, I give unto my beloved wife, Irene Castle, to be her property absolutely and in fee forever.

"I make this disposition of all my estate, not only as a token of my deep love and sincere

From a photograph, copyright by Moffett, Chicago.

Vernon Castle in 1915.

Mrs. Castle's favorite portrait.

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affection for my dearly beloved wife, but also in grateful recognition of the happiness which I have enjoyed in her society during all our wedded life, and the great assistance which she has during all that time rendered to me in my professional work and career.

"In so disposing of my property, I am not unmindful of my beloved parents and other kinfolk and my many friends, and it is my desire that out of my many personal effects some token of my love and affection be given by my wife to each of them so far as is possible, the selection to be made by her in accordance with the wishes that I may have expressed to her during my lifetime, or as her discretion may dictate, but this expression of my desires shall not be construed as limiting or restricting in any way the absolute bequest of all my property to my wife."

Vernon danced in Fort Worth and at the Country Club near there just before the accident on Benbrook Field. Our last dance together was while he was instructing up at Camp Mohawk, Canada. He had been given permission to come to New York especially to dance with me at a British Recruiting Benefit, which was held at the

New York Hippodrome. Because of the nature of the occasion he had been given permission to dance in uniform. He wore his dark-blue dress uniform, and I a little red-braided blue jacket with a Scotch cap. It had been long since we had danced our old dances together, and it had been necessary the day before to work quite hard in brushing up. I had expected that Vernon would have forgotten altogether a lot of the steps, or that he would be a little stiff from lack of practice, but on the night of the benefit he danced divinely. At the close of the performance many beautiful flowers were handed to us over the footlights. We bowed again and again our thanks. In the wings Vernon nervously kissed my hand, and there were tears in his eyes. I wonder if he guessed. We had danced our last dance, and the last ring of applause for us was still.

The world had been very good to us. We had lived well and lavishly because of that same applause. Together we tasted success, fame, and money. Thank God that at no time during that night did I dream it was the end.

HIS LETTERS

Savoy Hotel, London,
February 26, 1916.

We landed safely this morning about 3 A. M. after a great deal of delay with the customs, and the people who question every one who comes into England now. They have to be so careful, and I had an extra difficulty with my name. You see I came over with my passport as Castle, but as Father's name is Blyth it was very hard for me to explain. You see I should have probably have come as Vernon Blyth, but I thought there would immediately be terrible difficulty with my mail and everything, because Vernon Castle has been my name for ten years. My life insurance is Castle, and there are a thousand reasons why I couldn't go back to my old name, but I had a great deal of hard work trying to explain it to the officer in charge. He said I should change my name legally by "letters patent," whatever that means.

Well, darling, on arriving in London I went to this Hotel, where I shall stay for a day or two

until I know what my plans are going to be, and had a bath, etc., and went across to the Gaiety to see George Grossmith. He seemed delighted to see me, and he knows several people of influence in the Flying Service and immediately got in touch with a man in the Admiralty who is going to see me at twelve o'clock to-morrow. He said that there should be no difficulty in my getting in at once, as I already had received my Pilot's license. I'm quite excited about it, as believe me one feels an awful mutt in this place without a uniform. London is very surprising. I expected every one to be very sad and the theatres empty, but on the contrary the show business is better than it's been in years, the place is simply packed with soldiers, who look splendid. Of course it's pitch dark at night, all the lights are either put out or dimmed to the extreme, and the sidewalks are whitewashed so that you can see them in the dark. The town is practically on the wagon, except for a few hours each day, and from 6:30 to 9:30 at night, and you are not allowed to buy anybody a drink; everybody must pay for their own, even the women. In George's dressing-room I found Raymond Hitch-

cock, he is going to play in a show here. He invited me to Ciro's, which is open until one, but no drinks. Our original band of Tuck and Johnson were there. . . . As they turned us out at one, Hitchy and I had to come home. God! how the people dance! Five years behind the times. Oh darling, if you were only here to show them how to dance and dress. There are no chic women to speak of, but the men are awfully smart, and it makes one feel very proud to see the way they take this war, it makes you feel awfully patriotic and sure of winning.

I'm very tired, sweetheart, so I shall close now. I hope to have good news in my next letter. I can't tell you any war news, as the Censor won't allow it. . . . I could cry I'm so lonely sometimes, and everything reminds me of the time when we were here together. Johnson's band played all our old favorites to-night, and brought tears to my eyes. We did have such wonderful times, didn't we, darling? . . .

I'm a good boy about writing, aren't I, darling? I hope it keeps up. Kiss all the pets for me, dear, and tell Rastus his Daddy loves him. . . .

SAVOY, LONDON,
February 29, 1916.

I'm sorry not to have been able to have written you Sunday and yesterday, but I have been to Norwich and I didn't get a moment to myself. . . . Grannie is a dear, she asked all about you, and sent her love. She isn't very well, poor dear, but she is frightfully intelligent. Most people when they get old seem to get sort of silly, but she is so very sensible. Norwich is alive with soldiers, they have always had soldiers stationed there, but now there are very few civilians. All my old school friends have gone, and some of them unfortunately have been killed.

I went to the Admiralty, and I think I will get my commission next Tuesday if all goes well. I also went to the War Office to see a friend of George's who has a lot of influence, but he was out, so I am going again to-morrow. There is an awful lot of waiting around to be done. I feel like a bad actor trying to see Shubert for a job.

Hitchcock 'phoned and asked me to dinner and theatre with some people named Joel to-night, and I accepted. We had a very nice dinner at

the Carleton, and after we went to a corking play in which were Gladys Cooper and Chas. Hawtrey. They are both simply wonderful, and I loved the piece. After, we went to Ciro's and had something to eat. The few ladies were fat and didn't dance, thank God! so I played the drum and watched the crowd, which is always amusing. It's when I get home that I feel so terribly lonely. I haven't even got a dog to talk to, but I guess I shouldn't grumble, especially to you, my darling, but at the same time I want you to know that I miss you too frightfully for words, dear, and I haven't even started to do any work yet. Oh, but we will have a wonderful time when I do get back. Won't we, darling? I haven't heard a word from you, up to the present. It must take a long while for mail to get to or from America now, what with the Censor and the few boats running. By the time you get this, all the news will be old, and I will, I hope, be in uniform.

Give my regards to every one we know, won't you, dear? . . .

SAVOY, LONDON,
March 4, 1916.

I missed writing to you again last night, but I have had a rather strenuous day, and I really felt too tired when I got home. Yesterday I was invited to a lunch-party at the Royal Navy Yacht Club, and at the table sitting next to me was a man named Captain Lorraine. He used to be on the stage, but is now in the flying corps, and early in the war did some wonderful work and got the Military Cross. I was of course delighted to meet him, and I told him of my intention to go in the Naval Air Service, and he told me that they were really the inferior branch, and that they were not doing any real fighting like the Army, and he offered to take me to the War Office after lunch, and do what he could for me if I wanted to join the Army, so of course I accepted, and after the meal was over we marched off to the War Office, and he took me up to the very head man there, who was quite a friend of his, and a Major. The Major after looking at an enormous book in which there were hundreds of names before mine, said, "Well, if he can fly, and you vouch for him, Lorraine, he can go right

in." And so, dear, I have got a commission, and am now a 2nd Lieutenant, R. F. C., on probation. The rank is not so high, but it is remarkable considering the fact that I have been here only a week, and they usually have to wait months and months, before getting anything at all, and commissions are not as easy to get now as at the beginning of the war. Lorraine says I shall only be in England two months, and then I shall be sent right out to France. My training-camp is in a place called Northfleet, which is in Kent, and I expect to go out there about Wednesday. I've been shopping all morning getting my uniform and kit made. I'll have my photo taken as soon as I get my uniform. One thing I have to be careful about, and that is not to get my name in the papers, over here; it is considered the height of bad form to go in for any kind of publicity or advertising. I shall be glad for them to know in America that I am really in the R. F. C., because I'm sure a lot of the people still think I'm bluffing, especially "Jim Jam Jems."

How is the show going, and how much longer do you stay out? Be sure and tell me all the news, dear. I do so long to hear from you, dar-

ling, and no letter ever comes for me. Oh if you only knew how miserable I feel sometimes you would feel very sorry for me. Sometimes the orchestras play your number, "Dancing-teacher, show me how to do the fox-trot," and I feel so homesick. Everything seems so very long ago, as though it were in a different life. If I would only get a letter from you it would help an awful lot. . . .

NORWICH,
March 8, 1916.

I received four lovely letters from you last night, and it was such a relief. You don't know what it means not to have heard from you in so long. It takes so long to get a letter now. I am expecting any day to be called to duty, but haven't heard yet. I tried on my uniform which is not quite finished. I'll have my photo taken when it is done and send it to you. I'm simply crazy about the little poem you sent me. I wish I could send you one, but somehow my words don't rhyme. . . .

You're in Dayton to-day. Poor darling, it's such a rotten town.

SAVOY, LONDON,
March 10, 1916.

I got back from Norwich this evening in time to have dinner here, and the first person I saw as I walked into the Grill Room was Ernest Lambert; he looked just the same except that he had grown a mustache. I, of course, thought he was "somewhere in France."

I've got my uniform now, and I look just like Rastus in it. I wear one of those little monkey caps on the side of the head. I am leaving on Tuesday, and have to report for duty Wednesday. I don't think it will be a very pleasant place, as I have orders to appear with a camp-kit which consists of a folding cot, canvas bath — waterproof sheets! and a lot of things that seem to say I'm going to sleep in a tent or something. However, I shall be very glad to get started anyway.

I went to a society party to-night. They had some coons, and the dancing was fine. Everybody there was over fifty; I asked where the younger element was, and was told that the young women all worked in the hospitals, and didn't go out at night as a rule, so getting wounded

has its compensations. I hear some Americans have just got in from New York, so perhaps I shall get some mail. I look forward to your letters more than anything on earth, darling. I hope you will write me often, if you don't I'll write you a lot, and make you feel ashamed.

I'm not going to write a very long letter to-night, dear, as I must be up early and do my shopping. . . .

Savoy Hotel, L[illegible],
March 12, 1916.

I have to write to you in red ink to-night as my tape is all worn out. I never thought I should wear a type-writing tape out writing to anybody, but I have.

There isn't much news darling, I have done most of my shopping and I am anxiously waiting for Tuesday to come. I shall have to write to you in ink then, as I am only allowed to take what I can carry, including my bed, washing stand and bath. I'll write and tell you all about it as soon as I get there.

Last night I was taken to the Hippodrome by Mr. and Mrs. Foster, and after to Ciro's. The show was quite good. Harry Tate, the comedian,

From a photograph by Ira L. Hill.

Captain Vernon Castle in the uniform of the Royal Flying Corps.

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is awfully funny. I get terribly homesick when I go to a show, I just long to be on the stage again. You would make a terrific hit here in a show. They haven't got anybody who can dress, or who looks pretty like you. . . .

To-night I had dinner with Captain Lorraine at the Carleton, and we sat in the foyer and listened to the orchestra, which is very good. The Carleton is very smart for dinner.

There is no news, sweetheart. Give my regards to all the company. . . .

R. F. C. Rinsly's, England,
March 20, 1916.

I'm afraid it's days since I wrote to you, but, sweetie, you must forgive me because I've had so much to do I absolutely haven't had a single minute to myself except when I have to go to bed, and — also I've been quite sick for the past few days. I had to be inoculated for typhoid, and for a day or two after it makes you feel quite ill. I have to be done again in a day or two, and also vaccinated. I guess if people in America could see me now they would never think it was me. My uniform makes me look

much taller, and I have a small mustache. I haven't been able to get my photo taken because I can never get into town. I get every other Sunday off, but then the places are closed. The following is a schedule of the day:

6.00 A. M. Early morning flying.
7.30 " Breakfast.
9.00 " Flying and mechanics.
11.30 " Glass of milk and cake!
11.45 " Attend lecture.
1.00 P. M. Lunch.
2.00 " Drill and parade.
2.30 " Flying, etc.
4.30 " Tea.
5.30 " Lecture.
6.30 " Wireless telegraphy and signalling.
7.30 " Dinner.

After dinner study for to-morrow's lecture. You will see by this, dear, that there is "nothing to do 'til to-morrow." The weather has been frightful, it hasn't stopped raining all week, and so the flying which we do in all weathers has been very bad. Of course we don't fly so much as on fine days, but we have to stand by the machines, unless we are given jobs to do. It all

seems so strange and different to what I am used to that sometimes I think I am dreaming. Yesterday (my day off) I went to Norwich for a few hours. I arrived there 1.39 and left 6.15, but Father wanted to see my uniform; he was very proud, and cried. He got a lot of fun walking with me to Grannie's house because all non-commissioned soldiers have to salute me, which is of course very thrilling!

The meals here are very plain, but quite good. They wouldn't suit you, sweetie, as we never get chicken, and we have to go up to the chef, plate in hand, and get our own food which is somewhat of a scramble sometimes. They have apple pie every day, which rather pleases me. I hope you won't get the impression, sweetie, that I am kicking about my fate, because I'm not. It's what I expected and I enjoy it all but the weather. I expect to be here, dear, for two months, and then I will take an examination, and if fortunate be decorated with a pair of wings, and sent to the Front, which will be about June 1st. You speak in your letter, darling, of coming here to see me; if you did this before I went to the Front, I'm sure I could arrange to get a week

off, to spend with you alone. It seems too good to be true, I shan't think about it or I'll cry. I'd give my right eye to have you with me for a little while. . . . Send me some photos, darling, I haven't any of you but my pocket ones, and the red leather frame I used to have in my dressing-room.

I must go to bed now, darling, as I have to get up so early in the morning. Give my love to all our nice friends. Kiss my Rastus boy for me —bless his little heart. I bet he's cute with his little wardrobe trunk. God bless you, my sweetie. . . .

SAVOY HOTEL, LONDON, ENGLAND,
April 7, 1916.

. . . It's ages since I wrote you, but I've been terribly busy, and then sick, and I simply haven't had time. At the moment I am on sick leave with influenza. I've been in bed three days, but I'm better now and I am going back at 6:30 A. M. to-morrow morning. . . . One of our chaps got killed the other night. He was going up after a "Zep" and I guess he overcontrolled in the dark, and fell. He fell quite close to me, and made me feel awfully sick.

I was out all night in charge of some flares (they are bon-fires for lighting up the field at night) and I guess I must have caught my cold then. The "Zeps" are pretty busy lately, but we manage to keep them away from London, and they don't seem to worry anybody. . . . If you have any new photos I wish you'd send me one or two, darling. I came away without any and all I have is what I cut out of magazines.

There isn't much news that interests you, sweetheart. I went to Raymond Hitchcock's opening night last week. He was a big success. I also went to a party afterward given by a flying officer who was just leaving for the front. I saw Pito there so he wasn't killed after all. I also heard from Tim, and he gets a week's leave soon, and I am going to meet him in town.

Lionel Walsh is a Major out at the front, and quite a big nut. I must close now, dear. I won't keep you waiting so long for a letter in the future.

RINSLY'S, MIDDLESEX, ENGLAND,
April 14, 1916.

. . . Here is the proof of my photo. I'm afraid it's not very good. I shall go and have it

taken again when I can. It's rather hard as we are not allowed out of Barracks in the day time. This was taken when I was on sick leave, and it looks it. I hope Rastus likes it — he looks like his Daddy.

There's no news, dear. I'm improving in my flying faster than anyone here, and I'm now flying the big machines they use for fighting. They are perfectly wonderful and much easier to fly than the small powered machines, just as a big car is better than a small one.

I'll write a regular letter to-night, dear — it's lunch time now. . . .

UPAVON,
May 13, 1916.

. . . How sad it is to have you leave me so soon! I can't realize it yet. It seems as though I have had a very beautiful dream and that you haven't really been here at all.

This is a rotten day. Poor Child, I do hope you get better weather; it will be such a rotten trip any way.

I hear that the flight I am posted to is to be moved to a place called Gosport, which is on the South of England Coast, and more out of the way

Snap-shots taken during Mrs. Castle's six-day visit to her husband before he left for the front.

"Those six days were so short that they seem like a dream, and I haven't lived since."

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than this. I shall be sorry if they send me with it, because, although it's not very lovely here, they have a squash court, and I have very comfortable quarters. If I move I'll cable you.

The machine I am to fly is called the Morane Monoplane. It is a very small machine and very fast.

Thank you for sending me fruit, darling. I haven't received it yet but I expect it to-night. . . .

CENTRAL FLYING SCHOOL, UPAVON,
May 14, 1916.

. . . I haven't smiled yet. I feel so lonesome and blue. It's just terrible, having your mate snatched away. I received your sweet letter this morning. It was so good, hearing from you and now I guess I shall have to wait a long while before I hear again. Your little prayer was too adorable, Sweet. I am going to tie a string to it and wear it around my neck until after the war; God will surely listen to such a pretty prayer.

It has been raining all day here, and I have only done twenty minutes flying. The hours here are a little trying. We have to get up at

4:30 and start flying at 5 A. M., and only stop at 8 P. M. I get very tired after dinner and quite ready to go to bed at 9:30. We are supposed to dress for dinner, so I have written Foster and asked him to send me my bag with my dress clothes.

There isn't much news. I am afraid you'll get some awfully dull letters from me. . . .

CENTRAL FLYING SCHOOL,
May 17, 1916.

. . . I am sick in bed with a slight attack of tonsillitis. Yesterday at 5 A. M. I had to fly a machine to Gosport and bring an old one back. On the way back a valve in the engine broke, and I was forced to descend in the middle of Salisbury Plain, in the rain and miles away from the nearest village, and there I had to stay for fourteen hours, before help arrived. The result is a bad cold and sore throat which the Doctor calls tonsillitis, but it isn't anything like as serious as when you get it. I am staying in bed all day and I expect to be all right in the morning.

I haven't heard how long I am to stay here, but I don't think very long. I shall be glad to go as it is very miserable here.

The fruit came last night, darling. Thanks ever so much. It's perfectly delicious. It's going to be terrible, waiting for a letter from you, dear, but when they do come I'll get a lot, won't I? How is the boy Rastus? I hope he will keep warm. . . .

FORT GRANGE, GOSPORT,
May 26, 1916.

I wonder how you are and what you are doing. It seems ages since you went away, and it is only two weeks to-day. The time passes awfully slowly here. The days are so long, and this new daylight saving scheme of putting the clocks forward an hour makes them all the longer. . . . Our anniversary is day after to-morrow, isn't it, darling? I forget if we were married on the 28th or 29th, but I am taking a chance on the 28th. Oh dear, I hope we are together on the next. There is no news. As usual, here, nothing exciting has happened. It is very good flying weather, and every one is very nice to me. I am writing every day, dear, but I guess you'll wish I didn't because my letters are so dull. I'll buck up when I get a letter from you, and probably will have lots of questions to answer. . . .

Fort Grange, Gosport,
May 27, 1916.

To-day I have a little something to write about. I am afraid I can't make a whole lot of it. When I went up for my flight this morning on a Bleriot monoplane I took up a sergeant with me who wanted a ride, and when we were up about ten miles from the aerodrome, an inlet valve broke, which means you have to turn off your petrol and come down at once as your machine is apt to catch fire. Well I managed to spot a big wheatfield and manœuvred to land in it quite respectfully. Of course we were surrounded by the usual crowd of school children and farm hands, who see machines in the air every day, but never see them closely. Presently the owner of the field came along in a motor bike and side car, and he very kindly offered to take me to his farm where I could telephone. So I left the sergeant in charge and went off with the farmer. He was quite young and very clever. He has the cutest farm, darling, I have ever seen. Six dogs of different sizes and breeds; little ducks in a pond, and ever so many cows in a dairy; little colts and everything in the world that goes with a farm.

The loveliest old farm home in the world, with modern bathrooms. He lives there all alone and makes his living as a farmer.

O! darling, I do wish you had been there with me. He must have thought I was a fool. I was so tickled with his dogs, and little ducks, only a day old, swimming about, not caring a darn about their chicken mother. He gave me a peach of a lunch and I returned to my plane and found that it had been fixed, so I said good-by, and sai away. The field was so much more difficult to get out of than in. I managed to dodge the trees and so ended a very pleasant little diversion. I guess I've bored you stiff, sweetheart. I should have written this letter to mother, as she likes descriptions.

It's awfully hard to write when nothing happens to write about. This evening I flew the machine (the first time) that I'm going to fly at the front, namely a Morane monoplane. It's an awfully nice machine, and I enjoyed it very much. . . .

Give my love to all at home and a big kiss for the Boy from me. . . .

Fort Grange, Gosport, England,
May 30, 1916.

. . . I've now got to a point where I simply can't write. There isn't a thing to write about. All I do is suck my pen and vainly try to think of something to tell you. . . .

I'm taking a machine to Northolt to-morrow which will be rather nice as I shall see —— Do you remember him? Poor old ——, the one you offered to give a dancing lesson to at the party, has lost his nerve as a result of his crash. He's too nervous to fly again, so he is being transferred to a balloon section. I'm awfully sorry because he was a peach of a pilot. . . .

Well, darling, good-by till to-morrow. I hope you're happy, Sweetie, but I hope you miss me. . . .

Savoy Hotel, London,
June 3, 1916.

I was sent here this morning to report to the War Office for Service Overseas and I am to go to join a Squadron in France this week. They couldn't tell what day I was to leave, but I am to report to Gosport Monday morning and be ready to leave when I am told, which, I imagine, will be about Wednesday.

I'm awfully excited about it, of course. I don't care much about staying here if I can't be with you and I'd much rather be fighting. I 'phoned Mrs. Hubbel early this morning at the Piccadilly. She was packing up her things to sail for N. Y. to-day. Her train left at 10:30. I went round and helped her with her luggage and saw her off. I told her to give you all my love, Sweetie. You don't know, dear, how I have missed you to-day. Everything here in London makes me think of you. I have just come back from Ciro's with Mr. and Mrs. ——, but I couldn't help feeling depressed. I wanted my mate to dance with, and the boy to buy some grapes for. . . .

Savoy Hotel, London,
June 4, 1916.

. . . This is only going to be a short note because I have to get up early to-morrow in order to be at Gosport. I went out with the —— in the Rolls this afternoon, to Maidenhead on Thames, and we had tea at a hotel near the river. I had a very nice time although the weather was very bad.

We went to Ciro's again for dinner. It was

too crowded to dance. I played the drum most of the time. By the time you get this, Sweetie, I think I shall be in France. I wonder if I shall get any letters from you before I leave England. I do hope so — it will cheer me up ever so much if I do.

I'm enclosing a picture of you, dear, which came out in the *Daily Mirror*. I've got your little prayer chained to my neck on the watch chain you gave me last Xmas. I have worn it ever since I received it, and I shall keep it on till I come back to you, darling. . . .

SAVOY HOTEL, LONDON,
June 6, 1916.

. . . This is my last night in London as I leave for France to-morrow. I haven't been told yet what squadron I'm going to, but I shall cable you to-morrow and let you know. I feel awfully blue. I wish you were with me to-night, darling.

We have just heard the news of the loss of Lord Kitchener, and it has sort of depressed everybody. Another thing that worries me is that I haven't had any letters from you. . . . I suppose the censor is holding them up, but I do

want them before I leave. I am sending my motor bike to Norwich to be stored. I was sent away so suddenly I didn't get time to even try to sell it. . . .

Well, darling, I must close now. I shall still try and write you every day even if the letters are short and dull. . . . Don't worry about me. Everything will come out all right and "we'll live happily ever after." I shall be thinking of you every minute no matter where I am. . . .

FRANCE,
June 9, 1916.

DARLING:

I have just arrived in France, and I leave for my Squadron in a little while. I have thought of you all day, sweetheart. I hope you won't worry about me.

Everything here in France is very thrilling and sometimes a little sad. I am very happy, darling. . . .

I have just arrived here. "Here" is a little village in France, and I am quartered in a funny little cottage, kept by an old French woman. I have to walk over a manure pile to get to my

room. It's horribly dirty outside — but quite clean in.

I've been travelling all night without sleep so I am going to rest a few hours now. Five of your pictures are hanging on the walls — such beautiful things look very strange amid such dowdy surroundings. . . .

FRANCE,
June 13, 1916.

. . . It's just a month to-day since you sailed from England. I can hardly realize it — it seems to me quite a year. Time passes quite quickly here, but somehow it seems such ages since I had you with me.

The weather has been simply appalling and there has been very little activity. We are expecting a big drive all along the front, in which we hope to gain a lot of ground. When this will take place I don't know, but I don't think it will be many weeks now. I hope not any way. I'm sick of this place and the only relief is being up in the air. The village is terrible, and the food we get isn't a bit nice. If we were only near a town where one could get a decent dinner, it would be all right, but we're out of bounds

from any where decent. . . . Forgive me for grumbling, won't you, darling? I have no one else to tell my troubles to, and it's done me lots of good to tell my mate.

Don't worry about me, darling, tho I didn't expect to find this a picnic. All leave has been stopped so there isn't much chance of my being in England for some time. When you come back tho we must try and arrange for me to get some leave, or a job in England. . . . I guess I shall have earned my leave by then. . . . Every day I look in vain for a letter from you. Perhaps I'll get one to-morrow. . . .

British Army in Field, France,
June 16, 1916.

. . . I received three more letters from you to-day, and some music, and a letter from Mother. Gee! it's been a great day for me.

I haven't missed a day writing to you, Sweetie. My letters have been pretty punk, but I always send an envelope.

Your letter prayer is always round my neck. It's getting a little "grubby" now. I can only get a bath twice a week, but that's considered very often here in France.

I'm so glad you've got the black pony. Did you have to write twice for him? Perhaps one of your letters has gone astray. I hope not, but I guess it can't be helped if any of them do.

Gee! I wish you had got Rastus' younger brother, but of course the boy would not have liked it, so it couldn't be done.

Gee! I wish I could go with you to hear the coons play. Remember me to Tracy and Buddie, and the boys if you see them.

Thanks ever so much, Sweet, for the music. It's awfully good of you to think of it.

I haven't done any fighting yet, but things are going to be very busy soon. The General was here to-day and told all the Pilots to learn all the positions of the various places along the Front. We've got a nice day to-day, for the first time since I've been here.

Well, darling, I've got to go and fly now. . . .

FRANCE,
June 17, 1916.

. . . I received a lovely long letter from you this morning, and gee, you don't know how tickled I was to get it! I don't know what I shall do

when you get to California, letters will take so much longer, but I think it will do you all sorts of good, darling, and I'm awfully glad you're going.

I had a letter from Miss Marbury to-day from Versailles, and she wanted to know if I could get 24 hours leave of absence, but it is quite impossible I think, much as I should like to see her.

I think you are very wise, dear, to go on with your affairs, etc., without saying anything about coming to England. Something might easily happen now and then. If I got wounded I would no doubt be sent to New York, or I might possibly even get leave to come and see you for Xmas, because there is not very much flying done here in the winter, and I could easily be spared then, but the best thing is for us to wait and see. I don't think I could live till next Spring without seeing you, darling, and yet, on the other hand, it would be a shame for me to bust up a play, just for my own selfish motives.

I'm so glad America is waking up a bit, and that all the decent men are doing something toward it, but it doesn't look as though U. S. were going to have trouble with Mexico now, and I'm very

glad, because she is so frightfully unprepared. Think the men would come up like a shot but there would be no equipment or ammunition for them, and of course their aeroplanes are very bad, and the best machines we can buy in America wouldn't be used for anything but teaching, over here, which is very sad for a nation which has as much or more brains and initiative than any other nation in the world. I think the tide has at last turned for us over here. We are making the kind of advance we are likely to keep, but at best it will be a slow process and I can't see the end of the war this year. I hope you have received the R. F. C. cap by this time. . . .

I hope you will send "Tell" to Throop if he will have him. I'm so afraid he might snap at Rastus. . . .

June 18, '16.

. . . I did not get a letter to-day, but I got your press cutting about your landing. Thanks ever so much. It interests me so much to read all about you.

We had a very exciting day to-day. The German aeroplanes made a raid and dropped a lot of

bombs around without doing a terrible lot of damage fortunately. Five of their machines did not return and were brought down by ours. I was up in a little machine but did not see any of the Hun machines, but in the evening, just before I went to dinner, in fact, directly I went out after writing you, I saw a duel in the air in which the German machine was shot down. It fell at a tremendous rate, nose first, for the pilot managed to right himself at the last moment. His observer was shot in the knee, but the pilot wasn't hit at all, but was obliged to come down on account of his petrol pipes being shot away.

The squadron got him and entertained him at supper before sending him to a detention camp. We have the machine with us here. It's a "peach," and there are a lot of things about it which we would do well to copy if they only will.

The chief things about their machines is that they are comfortable. Their seats are upholstered and roomy, and you can sit in them for hours and not get tired, while ours are small and make your back ache after half an hour's flight.

I hope this doesn't bore you, darling. You know I haven't many subjects to talk about.

To-day hasn't been very good. The weather is cold and rainy. Oh, I nearly forgot to tell you. I've got a girl puppy. It's a sort of black and tan, and awfully cute. It was lost, and they were going to destroy it because the men aren't allowed to have dogs. I saw it and rescued it and it's terribly sweet, and as lively as anything. Trust a Mutt for being clever. I don't think it's more than 2 months or 10 weeks old, but it barks at tramps and can jump off a table with ease. I call it "Lizzie." This is her paw. . . .

FRANCE,
June 19, 1916.

Your letter of the 31st received this morning and also a little gold aeroplane. Thank you ever so much, Sweetheart, it's so good of you. The kewpie soldier and the Victor Records I haven't received yet. Of course darling, lots of things go astray, but it can't be helped. I got

all, or nearly all, of your cables, eventually. The censor delays everything considerable, but it's very necessary as nearly all the Spy's communications come or go thru' America.

Lizzie is such a nice little pup and so clean. I get quite a lot of fun out of her and she follows me everywhere. . . .

I wish I could send you some snapshots, but it's absolutely forbidden to have a camera, here. I have to go flying now, dear, so I must close. I'll try and write you a better letter next time. "Lizzie" sends Rastus a kiss.

FRANCE,
June 21, 1916.

. . . I wasn't able to write you yesterday I had so much to do all day, and in the evening just when I was sitting down to write, a lost French aviator came down in our aerodrome. I was the only officer here who could speak any kind of French at all, so I had to look after him and get him some dinner and a place to sleep.

We are just about to commence hostilities, I think. The guns have been going off pretty regularly now and we are all getting very busy.

I had a letter from you to-day, Sweetheart.

You had just been to Lew Fields' opening. I hope he will be a success.

There are some wonderful pictures of you in this week's *Sketch* and *Tatler* (June 14th). I guess you'll be able to get them at Brentano's sooner than I could send them to you, and I could only get one copy of them here.

Carpentier the boxer is quite close to here, in the French Aviation Corps.

The noise of the guns is extraordinary. It's just like thunder all the time. I shall have an awful lot to tell you when I get home. I'm the only officer in the aerodrome now. The others have all gone home to their respective quarters. We have to take turns to be the officer in charge all night, and to-night is my turn.

Well, sweetheart, I must close now. There isn't any news but war news, and I don't think that would interest you much. Things look much brighter for us at present. . . .

June 22, 1916.

. . . I am leaving here to-day. I have been moved up to Number One Squadron. I will let you know from time to time by cable that I am

safe, sweetheart. Cables are very expensive here so I can't wire often.

Number One is considered the "crack" Squadron of the Flying Corps, and I am proud to be in it. . . .

June 23, 1916.

. . . I've just arrived here at my new squadron where I shall no doubt remain for the next 6 months. This place is quite near the firing line, and I shall be over the German lines every day, but I will be as careful as possible, and with your little prayer around my neck, come back safe and sound. . . .

June 24, 1916.

Just a little line to say good night. I've been awfully busy all day learning the wireless signals, and about the machine-guns, etc. . . . The Germans are certainly busy about here, and you get plenty of "Archies." I suppose you must have ready about "Archie." He is a big German gun that does nothing but shoot at aeroplanes. They say one gets quite fond of him after a while. . . .

June 25, 1916.

. . . I wonder how, and where you are to-day? On account of my moving I haven't had any letters from you for four days, and I feel so lonely. I don't feel so far away when I have a letter from you. . . .

It's very exciting here. There is so much more to do, and it's a corking squadron. To-day I went to a small village a few miles from here, that has been under fire for a long time. I was going to tell you why I went there, but I guess it would be indiscreet in the eyes of the Censor, even if I didn't mention the name of the village. But I will have a lot to tell you when it is all over, and when I get old I shall be able to tell our children all about the Great War, and bore them to tears.

Most of the villages around here are more or less shot to pieces, and the inhabitants moved to more peaceful spots, but in some cases, old people insist upon sticking to their homes, and when a piece of shell carries away a corner of the cottage, they go to work and patch it up again.

It's very hard to make them understand my French, as the majority of them speak Flemish.

I am looking about for a griffon for you, but I haven't been able to get hold of one yet. Lizzie thinks she's a griffon and I let her think so.

It's been frightfully hot these last few days and most of our work is done either in the early morning or evening. We have to live in tents and I hate that. . . . Everyone here is crazy about Lizzie and she sticks around the camp all day and has a peach of a time. She is more of a squadron dog than mine now, but she sleeps with me. . . .

June 26, 1916.

. . . I can't write a long letter, Sweet. I've been in the air for three hours and been potted at by German anti-aircraft guns. It's quite easy to zigzag and dodge them, but it's frightfully tiring and one feels awfully lazy when one gets down safely.

Lizzie sends her love; she is fast turning into a canteen dog — if you know what that is. . . .

June 28, 1916.

. . . I am snatching a moment now to write you in case I don't have another chance to-day.

Our squad has suddenly got twice as much to do to-day, as usual, because the squad next to us is going out on a bombing raid, so we have to do their patrol and artillery work.

All our machines are being forced up in the air now, and I must go in five minutes. The sky looks like a rookery with all the birds flying about. There are fifteen machines flying over here at this minute.

I received the sweet photos in the ermine coat, darling, but I haven't had time to look at them properly yet.

It is awfully hot here to-day, and frightfully sticky and dusty. All the troops and equipments on the roads make one continual cloud of dust, day and night.

I also received the New York Sunday papers. Thank you so much, sweetheart. You have no idea what a treat it is to get an American paper. . . .

. . . I am so glad you have "my son" and that he's well and happy. The war is looking a little more promising now. We are winning on all points. Just around here the fighting has been terribly fierce, and the country around the firing line is just one mass of holes and rubbish.

From the air it looks like a very old piece of Stilton Cheese.

We only do two or three hours in the air, a day — it doesn't sound much, but after two hours flying and being under fire the whole time, you feel a wreck. But it's better than being in the trenches.

. . . Don't worry about me here. The best looking girl I've seen here looks like this, and had her last bath several epochs before the war.

In the Field, France,
June 29, 1916.

. . . I haven't anything to write about. The weather is very bad. The clouds are so low that it is impossible to fly below them without being hit by "Archie," and there isn't a break in them, so it is no use flying above them.

There is a gramophone here playing all of the "Watch Your Step" music, and it makes me so homesick. . . .

Lizzie is all right, as she takes care of herself, but we are under orders to be prepared to move on 6 hours notice with only 35 pounds of baggage. . . .

Lunch is ready, darling. . . .

FRANCE,
June 30, 1916.

Oh I am so happy to-day, darling. I have received all your mail. It came this morning — eight letters! I wanted to save some for tomorrow, but I just couldn't wait. It would have been worse than not looking at your presents till Xmas, so I simply went away all by myself and devoured them all. You don't know how I've waited and longed for just a word from you. I almost cry all the time I'm reading the sweet things you say to me. . . .

I took a machine over the firing line to-day and had a perfectly wonderful time. I left it at No. 3 squadron and had tea with them. They are such a decent bunch. . . .

As soon as the big flight starts I shall be moved up, so I don't worry much. Now I've got your letters nothing could make me unhappy. At No. 3 they have two little raggy dogs — twins —

named "Push" and "Pull." The only way you can tell which is which is to blow in their faces. If he puts his tongue out at you it's "Push." If he doesn't, it's "Pull" — isn't that cute?

Darling, I'm so proud of you winning that cup, and I'm so interested in your work. I know you will be a great success, and I shall be more tickled than a mother. I wish I were there to help you. Not that you need it, but I could kid myself along that I was of some use.

I'm sorry, Sweetie, that I haven't any snapshots for you. I sent you one yesterday. We don't have cameras at the front much, except special ones for photographing gun positions, etc. Gee, the guns look so large. I never realized they were so enormous, and they are all painted with green and brown spots so as to be indistinguishable against the ground.

I must close now, darling — you must excuse the pencil because I've only got one fountain pen full of ink, and I'm saving that for the envelopes. . . .

I say my prayers every night to God and you, love. Don't worry about me, precious. I'm very careful always. Kiss little Rastus for his

Daddy. Don't forget to send me newspaper clippings and anything from you that will go in an envelope. I feel so far away sometimes. . . .

FRANCE,
July 1, 1916.

. . . I wasn't able to write you yesterday. This is the first day I've missed since I've been out here, so you must forgive me, Precious.

I was terribly busy yesterday. I had 25 photographs to take over the German Lines, and what with taking them, developing them, etc., I was going from 7 A. M. till night, and I couldn't have written a letter to save my life. This photography is the worst job one can get because they have to be taken very low and one is well in range. I had my plane hit three times with pieces of shell, and the concussion you get makes you think the machine is blown in half. I don't mind telling *you*, darling, that I was sick with fright and jolly glad to get back home, only to find the wretched camera man had put the plates in wrong and that I had to go up and take them all over again. I got them all finished but one, yesterday evening. I shall take that one to-day, but one

is easy, because I can dart down over the spot, "snap it," and beetle off home before the Archie guns get a range on me.

I hope I don't frighten you, Sweetie. Perhaps I shouldn't tell you all this, but one doesn't get these jobs often, and they are really not as bad as they seem.

I received three letters from you to-day, Sweetheart, written on May 22d, 23d, and 24th. They had gone first to Central School and from there to Gosport, then to the Savoy Hotel, where they were sent to Northolt. Then they were put into a fresh envelope and sent to C. F. S. again;— back to headquarters in England and lastly here to France. . . .

I have also traced the Victor Records. They are detained by the Customs who want the shipper's original invoice.

There is no further news, my Love. Things are pretty much the same here, but I hope something is done one way or another, before the cold weather sets in.

Good-by for the present, little Wife. God bless you and keep you safe and happy always. . . .

France,
July 2, 1916.

. . . I shan't be able to write you to-day as I have to go to a town some way from here, and fetch a new machine back, and it will take me all day.

To-night there is going to be a squadron dinner. I'll tell you what that is to-morrow, dear, but as I am now the officer in charge of drinks at the Squadron, I shall be kept busy all evening. . . .

France (near Ypres),
July 3, 1916.

The weather has been very fine lately and so there has been a great deal of aerial activity. Gee! I'll have so many tales to tell when I get home. I suppose that everything in America is preparedness and every one will be joining summer camps.

I'm so glad you're fond of my Boy, Tell. I think of him an awful lot and wish he were with me, but I'm thankful he's not as I like to think of him with you. Do you ever make him do any of his tricks? I don't think he will ever forget them; although, of course, his scent will not be so keen. . . .

Saying good-by to Tell.

It was one of his greatest joys on being sent to Canada that he could have Tell with him again.

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ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

I suppose you have read in the papers that we have made some progress in the War. I only hope we keep all the ground won. I sent you a post-card the other day. It is the nearest town to us here and gives you a rough idea of what it looks like around these parts.

God bless you, and all the animals around you. . . .

FRANCE,
July 4, 1916.

. . . Two sweet letters from you to-day. It's so lovely to hear from you all the time. . . . I love the snap-shots you sent me. I've got them pinned up all around my tent. I think B. Drew is awfully nice and Lou is a peach.

I am resting to-day because I had a spill yesterday. My machine turned turtle on landing. The engine went "fut" and I couldn't quite make the aerodrome. I'm not hurt a bit, but they seem to think that a day's rest after a spill is good for the nerves. I haven't suffered from "nerves" yet so I really didn't need it.

We have gas helmets here on account of German gas attacks. They make you look like "ghostesses." . . . My dear love looks so nice

in the picture, but where's Rastus? I'd like a line or two from him once in a while. There isn't much for me to write about, Sweetheart, so I will close now. I hope you get all my letters. I've written every day.

July 5, 1916.

. . . I could get such wonderful snap-shots, but it's absolutely forbidden, and a Court Martial offense. The French Army are all allowed to have cameras.

We are doing wonderful things just at present. Gee! I hope it will last. The Flying Corps has had rather bad luck. They lost fifteen machines this last week. I hear to-day that poor Coats — the boy who gave the party with us, was shot down. I didn't hear any details, but I hope he wasn't killed, or better still, that it was a mistake.

Anyway, if we keep on as we are going now and don't lose any ground, I think there is a chance of our having peace this winter. Wouldn't it be wonderful!

I hope you don't mind my writing in pencil, darling, but I don't get much time, and I can write quicker this way.

How is Mother? Give her my fond love. I would like to write her, but I'm awfully bad at writing, and I only have time to write to you, darling.

Lizzie sends her love to Tell. She is a great joy to me, and to most of the officers here. They all love her.

There is a hospital next to us here, and there are an awful lot of wounded come in. It's extraordinary how happy some of them are because they have been wounded and are going to get a rest, and if they get a good wound, they get what they call a "Blighty" — which means they get to England. It seems the height of good fortune to get a "Blighty."

The Marmon looks splendid in the photos you sent me. I would give anything for a ride in it. I haven't driven a car for nearly six months.

I hope Dodd is getting along all right. . . .

B. E. F., France,
July 6, 1916.

I can't write a long letter to-day because I am Orderly Officer and that necessitates my being on duty twenty-four hours. It only comes round

every three weeks and this is my day. There isn't any news anyway. There was no mail for anybody to-day; it seems to have been lost, or perhaps only delayed.

I've been out here a month now. The time passes fairly quickly. It will be Christmas before long and then if you are not over to see me I must try to go and see you. . . .

FRANCE,
July 8, 1916.

Had a letter from you to-day about the fight Tell had with Dick, and I really think, Darling, that you had better send Tell to Throop again. He's such a big dog and more than a handful for any woman, let alone you, with all your pets. Throop is awfully fond of him, so it would be all right. I guess he's so fond of you that he can't control his jealousy. I can quite understand how he feels, poor boy; and his great-grandfather was "Boiwalf, the First," who was half wolf, you know.

The second episode of the picture also arrived to-day, Sweetie, but I haven't had time to read it yet. I've been frightfully busy. We have a bunch of new officers and as I am Mess President,

I have to arrange the sleeping accommodations for them. We are very crowded as it is, so it makes it very hard.

So glad Buster is a cute monkey. I'd love to see him and bet he's not as clever as Rastus. I'm sending the Boy off a present to-day if I get time. It's a card-board mandolin, full of sweets. It's sort of fragile, so it may not arrive. I can just imagine him opening the parcel. I must send something to Buster, too.

. . . I'm sorry only to have been able to write you little short scribbles these last two days, but being an orderly officer takes up absolutely all one's time, and then, too, I was up all night, with telephone messages, etc.

Yesterday I had to sit in a Court of Inquiry regarding one of our pilots who crashed a machine, and who is now, unfortunately, passing away from internal injuries.

When an accident not due to the war occurs in the Aerodrome, we have to hold a Court of Inquiry and bring up witnesses, etc., to determine whether it was the pilot's fault, the Government's, or the machine. In this case it was undoubtedly the carelessness of the pilot.

I suppose all this bores you, darling, but I haven't any news that's interesting, and I haven't had a letter from you for several days, so there is nothing to answer. I wrote to Tim the other day, but as yet have received no reply. He is around these parts somewhere, but just now regiments and battalions are continually changing and it's hard to locate any one. . . .

I am sending you some papers. The "Fragments from France" are very funny, and really give one a better idea of the scenes and life out here than anything I've seen yet. Also sending *The Sketch* and *Tatler* with your pictures in. . . .

I wonder when I shall see you again. This seems such a long war, and I don't think it can possibly end before the Autumn of 1917, but we must hope and pray for the best.

Gee, I wish I could write you a decently interesting letter, dear, but I have nothing jolly to tell you. The weather here is very hot. It rains all the time, and I suppose in New York you are absolutely baking.

Since I've been writing this letter "Lizzie" has brought me 3 slippers from different tents. She's just gone out again. I hope she brings me a

pair this time. She's the cutest little mutt. Give my boy Tell and Rastus a couple of nice kisses from their Daddy, will you, Sweetie? I'm so glad the son does his tricks for you and that you enjoy having him. . . .

FRANCE,
July 9, 1916.

I received three sweet letters from you yesterday. They just came at the right moment. I was feeling very depressed having just got back from a funeral. I shall have to stop this letter in the middle because I am due to go over and drop bombs on a Hun railway in a few minutes. . . . Now I must leave you for a while and go and do my bit. . . .

Back again, Darling — German aircraft seem to be very busy to-day. They were over here when I started out, but when I got up to 12,000 feet, I couldn't see any. I saw one machine which I thought might be a Hun so I turned to meet it, but discovered it was only one of ours, after all; but the pilot didn't notice me until I was quite close, and when he did see me he thought it was a German machine, so he fell about 2,000 feet out of fright. I was awfully

sorry I scared him, but it's always hard to tell German from English or French, until one gets close enough to see their marks.

I am sending you my cap to-day, Sweetie. You left it behind, but I thought that you did it because you didn't want it. It's very much dirtier than when you had it last, having seen active service, but you can get it cleaned in New York, and I can't unless I send it away. I hope you get it all right and that they don't hold it up for duty. . . .

FRANCE.
July 10, 1916.

I've just returned from way up the firing line. My Flight Commander had to go there to see a big gun battery. You see we work in conjunction with the gunners, and fly over the lines and signal to them by wireless just where their shots went, and keep connecting them until they get an O. K. or bull's-eye. I had never been near the big guns before and so it was awfully interesting. Gee, they make such a noise. They let me fire one and the noise is singing in my ears yet! It was a lot of fun, and quite a change for me.

Darling, have you got an old bit of fur you

don't want? I want a piece to sew on the collar of my leather coat. Any old bit will do — just to keep the draught from blowing down my neck when I'm up in the air. I shall get it all right if sent to No. 1 Squadron, R. F. C., France. . . .

FRANCE,
July 10, 1916.

Just another little bit of letter for you, although I haven't much to say. I haven't received your pictures yet, but I guess they will come here in a day or two. The post is fairly good here. Things very seldom get lost, and there is no duty on anything coming into France for any soldier in the field.

The Huns were dropping bombs on us last night, but they didn't get anywhere near us. . . . but it gives you one or two anxious moments as they are coming down. They make a very peculiar whistling noise as they are arriving. However, it is hard to figure out where they are going to hit!

July 11, 1916.

I received three very sweet letters from you this morning and one from Miss Marbury — you

had just received my first French letter — poor mite — I'm afraid the first few are rather miserable ones. I was so very depressed at not hearing from you. But I am not depressed any more. I am happy and I would stay here another year willingly if I could be sure that in the end I could get back to you safely, darling. O! I want to get back to you so badly. I shouldn't care if we didn't have a penny. I don't want any extravagant things any more.

I often think of how wonderful it will be when it is all over. We can perhaps have a little farm with lots of animals. We could buy a cheaper one and keep it for always. I was so foolish about Manhasset. If I had listened to you, dear, we wouldn't have had to sell it and get into all that trouble. But we'll know better next time. Oh! if only this War could end this winter; but I don't see how it can, and I'm here to see it through and take my chances with the rest. . . .

Father was tickled to death getting your letter. He sent it to me with strict instructions to return it. He has your pictures and I am writing him after this to forward them on to me and I shall return those I can spare.

How is Rastus? You haven't mentioned him in your letters for a long while and I'm getting worried about him. I must close now, dear, because I have two more letters to write — one to father regarding your photos, and one to Versailles to Miss Marbury. I'd like to see her but I don't think it can be done because we are expecting a big scrap here soon, and every pilot will be needed; but I shall want to hear from her about you and your plans. . . .

FRANCE,
July 12, 1916.

I had a note from old Tim to-day. He is quite near here and he is coming to see me as soon as possible. It's rather funny, isn't it, that we should happen to be so near each other?

It's been a wretched day to-day and yesterday. I am detailed to take some photographs of the trenches, but it's no good my going up unless I can get the sunshine. . . .

You must excuse a short letter, Sweetie. I have to do some work with the wireless people to-day. . . .

My love to all the pets. . . .

FRANCE,
July 13, 1916.

Just a little line before I go to bed. There is an awful row going on. The continual thunder of guns outside, and the more frightful singing of the officers inside. They suffer anything from "Pagliacci" to "Michigan." The favorite song seems to be "The Simple Melody" from "Watch Your Step." They didn't know how the rag part went; I showed them, and now I realize I've made one of the biggest mistakes of the War! Every night they take sides and sing on one side "Play a Simple Melody," etc., and on the other "O, You Musical Demon," etc., and the pianist playing an entirely different tune makes an Indian uprising sound like real music.

FRANCE,
July 14, 1916.

I have just received your cable about poor little Poudie, and it seems too terrible, and so unlike Tell. Of course I've no idea how it happened, but I guess you had better get rid of Tell, and I don't know if the Throops would want him now, because he might go for Hercules. O, darling, I'm so sorry. I'd much rather my boy

were killed, than your little Poudie. I see that your wire is sent from Ithaca, so no doubt you have started work at last. . . .

Yesterday was a terrible day with no flying at all; and Tim came over to see me. He's looking fine, and sends his love. We went into the little town near here and had tea, and talked about old times, etc. I was awfully glad to see him.

It's a better day to-day and I'm going out presently to take my photographs of the trenches. Tim's just as jolly as ever and laughs at everything you say.

We had some boxing bouts in the mess last night. It was lots of fun — you would have loved it. Two chaps got knocked out. We were all paired off as evenly as possible. I hadn't boxed since I was sixteen, but I didn't do so badly. I got one punch in the jaw that feels a little stiff this morning — but that's all.

Well, Sweetie, I think this is all I can write just now. I can't tell you how miserable I feel about poor little Poudie, but there is nothing I can do, unfortunately. . . .

FRANCE,
July 23, 1916.

. . . I'm sorry to write such short letters, but I don't get as much time now as last week. We are doing more work in the air, as you no doubt have read in the papers.

Last night, as I told you, we had a squadron dinner, which means that the whole squadron (consisting of 40 officers) dines at one large table and have a big champagne dinner. This was in honor of three pilots who had won military crosses. I have the job of providing all the drinks for the squadron, and I also arranged the dinner, which was a big success.

I managed to get a block of ice from a hospital in a town near here. We'd never had ice here before, and I made cocktails and champagne cup. Most of the boys got fearfully tight, but they are all very young and felt all right this morning. I suppose it does one good to have a party once in a while, but nothing will make me happy but you, darling. . . .

FRANCE,
July 24, 1916.

. . . I had a lovely mail to-day. Four letters from you, dear, a sweet one from Mother, and an

electric torch. A letter from Gladys with a cake in a box, and some papers from Mag. It's a pity, really, they all come at once, because I shall probably have to go days now without any letters at all. I haven't got your photo in the ermine coat yet, but I guess I will get them all right, as the delivery in France is pretty good. . . .

Darling, you said that one of my letters about the air raid near Bailleul was very interesting, and I'm so glad. Nearly every day I could tell you some interesting news, but I don't want to frighten or worry you more than necessary, so I try as much as I can to keep off the war in my letters, and then again I'm not allowed to put any thing in a letter that might be of use to the enemy, who are in every branch of our service, and never lose a chance to get hold of a letter in the hope of finding something of interest.

Oh darling, while I think of it — you might tell Dodd that my name is "Lieut. Vernon Castle" not BLYTHE.

"Civilization" must be a peach of a film, but as you say, a little gruesome. If it's anything like this war it must be terrible. I think I told you we are near the receiving hospital where they

get all the worse cases to treat before they send them to the Base, and some of the poor chaps are in a terrible state, and the worst cases seem to get better while others, apparently not badly hurt, die.

There is one poor chap, who has the whole of his jaws, top and bottom, blown away. Nothing from his nose down, and he's going to live while another man who hasn't a scratch on his body, but is suffering from "shell shock," will die. Things here seem all out of proportion. One good thing is, nobody seems to worry about anybody else, and so things go on just as tho nothing had happened.

Oh dear! I shall be glad when it's all over and I can come back to you, darling, but no one here seems to think it will be over this year even.

We have started an offensive, but it's been prepared against by the Huns ever since we started to prepare for it, and so to make any headway, will cost us more than it's worth. But there is one thing the Germans must realize sooner or later, and that is: *we are capable of going on with this forever, and we improve each year. . . .*

France,
July 27, 1916.

. . . I think the snapshot of you with Tell, Zowie, Rastus and the kitten the sweetest thing I have ever seen. I'm just mad about it. Zowie looks so sulky, and Rastus I know is saying nasty things to Tell. Gee, I'd like to be with you all!

I read the first episode of the movie this morning. I think it's awfully exciting. I only hope it won't be too melodramatic. I think one can get away with that sort of thing providing there is no expense spared. The 21st birthday ball, for instance, will be very hard, because most of these movie actors wear soft pleated shirts and pumps and the women wear such "chorus" clothes. All this can only be fixed with money enough to get the very best. . . .

Yesterday and to-day have been terribly bad days. Clouds at a thousand feet, so we have been practically at a stand still, except for a little signalling practice.

It's too bad it's been so hot in New York this year — it wasn't so bad last year, unless perhaps we didn't notice it, having Manhasset. Poor darling, you must miss a country place. It's not

much fun always visiting some one else's home. And Oh, dear, it looks as though I were in for another summer of this before it's all over, but we must hope for the best any way. The unexpected always happens.

There is absolutely no news for you to-day, darling, so I must say good night. . . .

FRANCE,
July 28, 1916.

. . . This will have to be a very short note I'm afraid as I shall be very busy to-day.

One of the chaps in our Flight crashed this morning, so we are a machine short all day, and the weather is wonderful, which means that machines must be up every minute. To-morrow we will have a new machine, and everything will be smooth again. . . .

I'm most awfully anxious to get the next bit of the scenario of your movie. The snapshots that you send me, darling, are a continual source of delight to me. . . .

FRANCE,
August 3, 1916.

This is another busy day for us and the weather is perfect. If it doesn't come over cloudy soon

we shall all be dead with fatigue. We did a big bomb raid yesterday on some Zepp sheds 90 miles over the German lines; it was terribly exciting. We were eleven machines altogether, and all but one got back safely. That one had to come down on account of engine trouble, and I suppose was taken prisoner. We don't know yet. No German machine came to attack us, and the Archie guns were very poor; it seems that it's only just near the lines that they are any good, because they get a lot of practice, and I'm sorry to say they are becoming pretty accurate, but inland they are awfully bad shots as they very rarely get a chance to shoot, then all of a sudden eleven machines came over, and they didn't seem to know which to choose. I don't think we did much harm to the Zepp sheds as only about three bombs hit the right place, but it must have scared them.

The Zepp raids have started again on England, but they seem to be worse than us on bomb dropping. I'd like to get a chance to "straff" a Zepp, but I guess I shan't until I'm sent for duty in England. I really think in the air we've got them frightened to death. I saw one to-day on Patrol

duty, and as soon as he spotted me coming toward him, he dived down and away like a stone.

O dear, I'll be glad when it's all over and I can fly in peace. Do you know, darling, that I'm in the R. F. C. for five years! It doesn't mean that I shall necessarily have to stay in the Army after the war, but I shall have to do about ten weeks flying every year, and can be called upon in case of another war, which is not very likely. I presume I shall have to go to Canada to do it unless we happen to be in England.

Well, sweetie, this is all for the present. . . . There isn't a minute goes by that I don't think of you, little mate. . . .

FRANCE,
August 4, 1916.

. . . I haven't had a letter for four days and I'm getting awfully hard up for something to write you about, and I'm not feeling very well to-day. I guess it's the heat or something. Anyway, they are giving me a day's rest from flying, so I'll be all right to-morrow. Flying at great height gives you a headache, sometimes, and your ears crack. You know how your ears

feel when you are going under the Hudson in the tube? Well, it's like that, only much, much worse.

I hope darling you will continue to send me the New York Sunday ——. It amuses me tremendously. It's really awfully pro-German. Gee, how I hate the Germans! The terrible things they do! I really didn't believe them when I was in America, but they are most all perfectly true.

The dragging away of all the young French girls from 15 to 20 and making them work and be servants to the German officers is simply frightful. We are quite near Lille and the towns they are taking them from, and it makes you feel that you want to take over bombs and blow up the whole town, but of course that would do more harm than good.

Did Rastus get the Jack-in-the-box I sent him? I wish I could see him open it, bless his little heart.

I must close now, Sweetie. Please forgive such a dull letter, but I haven't a thing to say. . . .

FRANCE,
August 5, 1916.

. . . No letter again to-day. Only a doughy old cake from ——. Of course it's darn nice of her, really, and I appreciate it and all that, but I suffer enough out here without having to fight home-made cake, but it will do for bomb practice.

To-day is a hot air day. The General is paying us a "surprise" visit!!! The Equipment Officers are dashing about as though they really had some work to do. The only person who doesn't seem to realize the General's importance, is Lizzie. *She's* barking at him.

We were raided by 5 Hun machines yesterday evening, but they didn't do any damage as they were driven away almost as soon as they appeared. We couldn't see them as it was getting dark, but we heard the machine-guns of our Patrol machines, firing at them, and then one of their machines fired off 3 white lights which means in German "going Home." The leading machine always fires off the lights and then the others follow. They have a whole set of signals with different colored lights, which we are able to read. So the raid was really, what we call here,

a "Washout." "Washout" is a word used an awful lot out here. It's the equivalent to "nothing doing."

I'm most awfully anxious to hear about your picture, darling. You must have started long before this. I hope you'll like doing it, dearest. I do wish I was there to help you, although I don't help, do I? I only make you nervous. Still, I'd like to be there, anyway.

This is all I can write to-day, Sweetie. God bless you and send me a letter in the morning. . . .

FRANCE,
August 7, 12 P. M., 1916.

. . . It's simply awfully late, but I haven't had a minute to write you before! This morning at 6 I was called and told there was a motor lorrie going to ——, a town quite large, but four hours ride from here, and as I had a lot of drinks, etc., to buy for the squadron mess, I had to get up and go there, and I've been in town all day waiting for the lorrie that was to take me back.

I had quite a nice time although I was all alone. They marched in a bunch of Hun prisoners, eight thousand of them. They had horrible unshaven

and criminal faces, but they looked on the whole very happy to be prisoners, and were joking away among themselves.

I did a lot of shopping and bought many luxuries that we don't get up at the front, such as fish, five blocks of ice, an ice-cream freezer, gramophone records, etc., etc. O! and, sweetheart, I have bought you your coffee glasses. I had only seen them in tin and nickel, but I managed to find four in silver. They are quite beautiful, and the woman is going to send for two more just like them, and in about eight days they will be shipped off to you. I am afraid, darling, you will have to pay duty on them, as they are quite valuable looking.

I'm very sleepy, dear, so I will continue this to-morrow, or perhaps I'd better close and write another to-morrow — more envelopes for you to open. . . .

August 10, 1916.

. . . I'm so glad Rastus was pleased with his little parcel. I guess by now he has his Jack-in-the-box. Gee, I'd give anything to see him open it. I'll get something else for him when I go to the village next.

I'm simply mad about the pictures of you and Rastus in his soldier's suit. The "Blinded Hero" one is absolutely perfect.

There are some Australians here somewhere, I'm told, who have two monkeys. I've been trying to find out exactly where they are, but so far have been unsuccessful. . . .

Darling, do be careful in your picture. Falling off a horse while it's running is no easy job, and should be done by a double. And the man that's to take you up in the hydroplane — Who is he? And how much flying has he done? And WHAT is the machine? For God's sake don't go up with some dub who has only just taken his pilot's license. Insist please, darling, on having an experienced pilot who has done at least one hundred hours in the air. You know, sweet, if anything happened to you through any one's carelessness I'd come home to shoot him dead. I'm not thinking for a moment of your getting killed, but you might easily get hurt by those fool picture people, who are always trying to get a "thrill." So please, dearest, for my sake, be careful.

To-day is a "dud" day. It's raining and cloudy, and if there is any thing more miserable

than an Aeroplane Squadron on a wet day, I'd hate to have to look at it. A Theatrical Garden Party is pretty bad when it's wet, but we've got them beaten by miles. . . .

August 13, 1916.

. . . I didn't have a moment yesterday to write you, and it is now evening and this is the first opportunity I have had to-day, but I'll try and write you twice to-morrow, sweetheart, so you shan't miss a letter.

I know that you will be sorry to hear that my poor little Lizzie got killed yesterday. She was run over crossing the road by a four-ton lorrie. Fortunately she was killed instantly, but I was very fond of her and miss her very much. Everybody is sorry here as she was a popular little mutt, but it was nobody's fault.

I haven't had time, dear, to read your movie episodes, but I shall read them after I finish this letter. . . . I haven't heard from Marbury since she has been here excepting one little note asking me if I could come to Versailles or Paris, but they are very strict about letting us trail about, and I think I'd rather not see her any way as she would only try to persuade me to tell you to stay

From a photograph by Hall.

Vernon Castle when he met Irene Foote.

Vernon was the first actor I had met, and I think at the time I was vastly more interested in him than he in me.

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ASTOR, LENOX
AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

in New York and, darling, I want to see you so badly that I couldn't go on indefinitely without you, I'm afraid. This is a rotten letter, Sweetie, but I'm very sleepy.

August 16, 1916.

. . . I've been so busy to-day that I haven't had time to write you, darling, but I promise I'll write you a nice long letter to-morrow, Sweetie, even if we have to stop the war for a few minutes. This is just to wish you good night, and God bless and keep you safe.

August 14, 1916.

Who do you think walked in here to-day? Hubert Neville! He's been sent here in charge of some men going to the trenches. Poor old Hubert has quite a rotten job, and is frightfully fed up, but he looks horribly healthy. I was very glad to see him, and he stayed most of the day. Isn't it funny, last time I saw him he was at "Castles-in-the-Air."

By the way, dear, to change the subject, do you use the Pelham bit on the black pony? You know it's that bit with the rollers on it. He goes fine with that, and you could pull him up in a

yard's length any time. I always used it playing polo with him.

I'm so glad Elroy is going to pay you a visit with the babies. I guess you get frightfully lonely at times, darling. I know how you like company. . . .

Gee, I wish the war would be over so I could be home for next summer, but I'm afraid to even hope. When we get our place in the country we will have a house built, or at least I think that would be nice. What we need is plenty of room for animals, and a great big English dining-room. We could never get a house big enough to hold the crowd we usually have around us, but we have out at the front here huts called the Armstrong Hut, and you have no idea how comfortable they can be made. We could have several of them, and be able to ask as many men guests as we like. I get a lot of fun trying to picture our future home in the country, so you must pardon my rambling on like this, darling. I daren't read over what I've written or I guess I'd tear this letter up, and I haven't time to write another.

I do so long to be back with you, darling, and have our dogs, horses and cows, etc., again. . . .

From a photograph, copyright by Underwood and Underwood.

Mr. and Mrs. Castle at their home in New York City.

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ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

August 15, 1916.

There isn't much to write about to-day, so I am afraid this will be an awfully dull note. It's raining hard now, the first real rain we've had in two months. I'm rather glad really, as the wells were getting dry, and we should soon have to do without our bath water.

I've just finished reading the two episodes of your movie, and enjoyed them very much. I think it's terribly exciting, and certainly the most dramatic thing I have read in some time. The only incident I don't think would get over is the shooting the dynamite fuse in half, thereby extinguishing it. I rather think that is carrying it a bit too far. Of course I'm probably wrong, but it struck me as being a little too "Deadwood Dickey." The leading man has an awfully big part. I do hope he is good. Please dear, don't let him wear a pleated shirt and pumps with his dress-suit!!! Has Rastus got a part? I think he might make up and play one of the Japs.

To-day I got a parcel of one thousand Virginia cigarettes from Mrs. Hubble. It was awfully sweet of her. I don't like Virginian tobacco, but there are a lot of men here who do. As a matter of

fact, the hardships that the men had to undergo at the beginning of the war, don't exist now, regarding cigarettes, socks and underwear, etc. They all get plenty of cigarettes, and clean underwear every week, and a bath every week. I think the most charitable thing one can do now is to buy artificial limbs for the poor chaps who get amputated. In fact, almost any hospital charity is better than sending things out to the front now.

It's stopped raining so I guess there will be flying this evening, and I had better be finding out about it, darling. Forgive my letters, sweetheart; if they are dull, they are really only meant to tell you that I am always thinking of you. I do miss you so much, and I want to see you more than anything in the world, precious. . . .

Give my love to all the pets. . . .

FRANCE,
August 18, 1916.

I didn't have time to finish writing to you yesterday. They wanted me to play in a game of cricket, and as there were not enough officers to make up the correct amount, I had to play. It's a rotten game; worse than baseball.

Last night we had quite a rough night. Three of our pilots are joining another squadron, and we gave them a sort of farewell party, which ended with their breaking up most of the furniture and drinking all the drinks in the place. One of our guests got his face walked on by a hob-nailed boot, and it was altogether a jolly evening.

I had a post-card from Elsie Janis this morning. They are sailing for New York again, on the 28th of this month. I don't expect to get to England until Christmas time, Darling, so I guess your picture will be over by then, and if we are lucky, you will be able to meet me. . . .

Fancy your going to Newport News. Perhaps they will take your aeroplane pictures there. I can think of no other reason for your going. . . .

As you are so busy now, Sweetheart, you will perhaps be able to write me between the scenes . . . one usually has long waits in the movies. . . .

I'm so glad you've written father, dear. He will appreciate it so much. The XXXX's on the letter I sent you, Darling, were kisses. Somehow we never put them on our letters, but when I wrote you that day, I had just finished censoring all the men's letters in the Squadron. It is the

Orderly Officer's job; and nearly all the boys put XXXX's at the end of their letters to their sweethearts or mothers or wives. . . .

August 19, 1916.

I'm sending you off three or four French pictures. I think you may like them. I went into a town to-day by tender, to do some shopping for the men, and I happened to see them.

Your coffee glasses haven't been sent yet, darling, as I haven't been fortunate enough to get back to the same town yet, but I expect to very shortly.

I've been busy all day, but not with the war, the weather being dull I have changed my hut, and have been all the morning fixing it up, and hanging up your pictures, bless you. . . .

We're going to have some pigs in the Squadron. I think they are coming to-morrow — little ones. When they grow up we shall have to sell them, of course, but I like pigs, and they will have plenty to eat as there is an awful lot of food left over in a Squadron. The Commanding Officer here (he's called the C. O.) is very fond of animals, and he's buying the pigs.

This is all for now, my love, you must forgive a short letter. It seems I'm always saying that. . . .

August 20, 1916.

I wonder what you are doing at this moment? I'm so homesick for you, my little mate, I'd just give anything in the world to be with you, my love, and I know you long for me, too. I've been wondering about you all day, darling.

There is a little puppy belonging to one of the chaps here, that's got distemper. Poor little chap, he's awful sick. The man who owns him doesn't know anything about dogs, and thought he just had a cold. I've been trying to fix him up a bit, but I'm rather handicapped because one can't get dog medicines here, but as he's a mutt, I guess he'll pull through.

The advertisements in the *Vie Parisienne*, dear, are I think just men who want to pick up women; they get their photo, and if they look all right when they get to Paris they call on them. The English Army are not allowed to advertise for strange friends, as there has been much spying done in that way; the women would get to know

just where a certain regiment was, and all sorts of information, so it has been stopped, and Paris is out of bounds except by special permission. I've got to go now, darling.

August 20, 1916.

I'm writing to you in real ink for a change. I received a sweet letter from you this morning. As a rule I get a batch of about five, but this one must have beat the others here. It was written on August 3d, so it's been pretty quick.

Thank you, sweetheart, for the clippings and snap-shots. . . . Tell and Zowie must look awful sweet tagging you around, but I wish Tell weren't so jealous. . . .

The music C. B. D. sent me is very good, and a chap named Barbu (a peach) is learning to play it. Did I tell you I have managed to get hold of a drum? I play with Barbu in the evening, and it is a great addition to the orchestra. There is a rag called Trilby rag, which I would like; it's got my picture on it playing the drum. If you can, will you send it to me, darling?

I am enclosing some sweet peas which are growing in a box outside my hut. It looks quite pretty,

really. Raymond Hitchcock has sailed; he sent me a cake and a box of candy before he left. Good-by for now, my precious. . . .

August 21, 1916.

I've just heard that we are not allowed to send any pictures — magazines — news cuttings or post cards, etc., etc., to neutral countries, so, darling, I'm afraid you won't get your pictures after all. Isn't it too bad. They have even stopped the embroidered post cards that the soldiers were so fond of sending. As it's war I guess I can give those up, but I'm sorry about the pictures, dear.

I heard last night that poor Basil Hallam was killed yesterday. He was in a kite balloon section in the R. F. C., and I always thought of him as having a *safe* job. They were winding his balloon down when the rope broke, and as the wind was blowing toward the Hun lines he and another officer in the balloon had to jump out with parachutes, and Basil's parachute didn't open. I hadn't seen him since I have been in France as he was stationed quite a distance from here, but I saw him in London, and he said he

was awfully "fed up" with the war. I feel awfully sorry as he was such a nice boy.

This isn't a very cheery letter, is it, darling? I will try and do better to-morrow.

August 22, 1916.

I haven't had a letter from you for a long while now, and I don't know what to write about. The weather has been quite miserable, and nothing very exciting has happened.

I have at last got your coffee glasses, and I will send them to you to-day, sweetheart. I do hope you will get them safely. I am sending them to Lexington Avenue, as you might have left Ithaca before they arrive. . . .

I must say good-by for now, sweetie. I don't feel like writing when there's no news. Little Joe, the pup with distemper, is better now, and the pigs have arrived and are quite happy. God bless you, my darling. . . .

August 23, 1916.

. . . I received three sweet letters from you this morning, and I was so happy to get them. Poor dear, you seem to be suffering from the heat so it must be awful.

The letter from —— was quite interesting. Did he promise you to get me a job in England? Because he has no influence, however good his intentions may be. He was only in England himself because he was too bad a pilot to be sent to France. As a matter of fact I would much rather be here than in England. One feels that one is doing something here, to help. It's usually untrue, but you feel that way, and also there isn't the "hot air" out here in France. C. O.'s and Generals and things are quite human. Of course if you were in England, darling, it would be different, but until you come, I guess I'm happier here in France. The only thing I miss is music and theatres and suppers, and well-dressed women and horses and cars and dogs, etc., etc. We have everything here in the way of dust, guns and aeroplanes.

I suppose you will "pounce" on the "well-dressed women" and think I want them, won't you? I don't though, darling. You could only understand what I mean if you saw the revolting sights that crawl around these war areas. . . . I get so frightfully fed up at times.

I'm so glad Elroy and the babies are still with

you. It must be a lot of fun having them 'round. Thank you, dear, for sending Ham's letter. There is not much war in Mexico, but it must be darned uncomfortable out there. The insects and things are so annoying. We have lost Barber, our pianist. Not killed — he's gone to England, and I don't know what we will do for music. Some suggest buying a pianola, but they are hard to get around here, and very expensive.

This is all for to-night, dear. I hope you don't get bored with my letters. Yours are food and drink to me. . . .

August 26, 1916.

The fur came to-day! Also the 2d episode of your movie. The fur is perfectly wonderful, dear, but much too good for my flying coat. I am going to have it fixed on my British Warm. You know that khaki blanket coat I have. It will look splendid on that, and I can buy a piece of cheap fur for my flying coat, because it will only get splashed with oil and rain, and would be a pity to waste good fur.

I didn't get the *Vanity Fair* with our pictures in. They have censored them coming to England for some reason or other. . . .

I'm awfully sorry, dear, you have had "Baby" on your hands all this while. If you can find a nice home for her, I should give her away. She is really only good for breeding for a polo pony, but she makes a pretty good saddle pony, but too much a thoroughbred to be comfortable. . . . You are so good to look after "Baby," darling. I just love you all the more for your sweetness to that little nag. If only we had our farm we could keep her, but we shall one day, sweetheart, and it will be worth all this separation and we will appreciate each other much more than we could have ever done otherwise.

I shall be so glad to get the invoice for the Victor records. If there are any more good dance ones that you think we would like you might send them direct here to France, and there won't be any duty. If it's much trouble, darling, don't bother about it; it seems I'm always asking you for something.

I must close now, dear. Thank you again for the fur, precious. . . .

August 30, 1916.

I received another sweet letter from you to-day, darling, and you are still suffering and in bed.

Oh my dear, I hope you will take care of yourself. I just hate to think of your being ill. I don't feel any too well myself to-day. It's been a simply terrible day, frightful wind and rain. The job I had to do, is of course postponed until the weather clears up. I was hoping that it would have been all over by this time. I just hate having something unpleasant hanging over my head. I prefer to get an order and go up straight away before I get a chance to worry over it. Now we are on an unpleasant subject, dear. If you should hear of anything happening to me, don't believe it right away, as frequently mistakes are made. A missing man might be a perfectly safe prisoner, and a wounded man only just scratched.

My precious little wife, you are so sweet to think of saving enough money to buy me a Rolls-Royce — but, darling, I don't want one, I only want you and a home. If I had one I'd *give* a Rolls-Royce just to look at you for five seconds. It seems years since that last night in the little Inn at "Pewsy," and those six days were so short that they seem like a dream, and I haven't lived since.

I haven't received the Sunday papers for some time, dear; perhaps the censors have stopped them, as the last N. Y. —— seemed to me to be very anti-British! Perhaps they will be sent on later. Darling, I do so love the poems you send. They are so wonderful. . . .

I love this one by David Morton:

"To-day the world has been too great a place:
Brave wars, and winds, and whirling stars are there,
To-night I want the solace of your face,
The soft and sombre beauty of your hair,
For I have been too long where dwarfing skies
Drowned me in distance, or in vasty gloom,
And now I want the quiet of your eyes,
To feel you near me in this little room.

To-morrow! ah, to-morrow I shall be
Once more a part of all earth's ways and wars,
Eager for strife and striving mightily,
Bearing brave banners up against the stars —
But not to-night — How strange I am, and old,
And you, how dear — Give me your hands to hold."

September 3, 1916.

. . . I couldn't write at all to you yesterday as I had to be at a strange Aerodrome the whole day. It's too bad, dear, I can't tell you what I was doing to be too busy to write you, but I

can't. We have to be so careful now in our letters, especially when they are sent to a neutral country, but I feel sure you will understand, darling, and will forgive me if my letters are a little dull.

I got two sweet letters from you to-day, dear. One of them enclosing two photos of "The Movie." It's some crock of a machine that "Juarez" was going to take you up in. I'm glad he was shot before he had a chance to leave the ground with you. . . .

Poor child, you are certainly working hard in this picture. I hope you don't wear yourself out doing it. I'm so glad you got rid of your neuralgia. . . . I'm crazy to get your "stills," darling. I'm so interested. . . . I didn't get myself a soft job like ——, my love, because I should feel a little ashamed if I had come all the way from the U. S. A. just to do an office job in England, and never get to the Front at all. I should like a job in England in winter, because I can't stand the cold, and if you come over, I can be with you. I shall any way be due for leave about Xmas time. I have never heard of a woman in the Flying Corps. I guess it's just a newspaper

From a photograph by Ira L. Hill.

Vernon Castle in his aviator's costume, 1917.

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story. *I don't want you to fly, darling, until I can teach you myself.* . . . If I could have a day in New York with you I'd be willing to walk all the way. Never mind, we will be together again soon, and then we will have lots of parties and suppers, and have the time of our lives. Gee, I wish the darned war would end. . . .

You bet I'll go to the dressmakers with you when I get back home, darling, and you'll come with me when I play polo, won't you, sweetheart? I want to be with you all the time to make up for being separated from you for so long. "Tell" and I will follow you about everywhere. . . .

God bless and take care of you, sweet little mate, until I can be back in the nest again. Mates sometimes pine away and die when they are separated. . . .

September 5, 1916.

It is now after 12 at night, and I'm only just back from a concert given by a Hospital near here. It was quite a success, and not half bad, considering. I played my drum and did a lot of solo dancing, which made a big hit. They get a lot of singing and recitations at these things, but rarely any one who can dance.

This morning, sweetheart, I received a cable from you; it frightened me for a moment, but when I opened it I was so happy. Also, dear, the whiskey has arrived in France. I haven't got it here yet, but I am sending for it to-morrow.

It is very late, sweetie, and I must go to bed. I am up at dawn to-morrow morning, but I will have a lot of time in the afternoon to try and write you a decent letter. . . .

September 6, 1916.

. . . Here I am with an hour to spare and I am sucking my pencil trying to think of something interesting to tell you. I got the 6th episode of the movie to-day. Also a book from Mother by Irvin S. Cobb. I just love Cobb. I think he's one of the funniest writers we have now. I used to know him quite well, years ago.

To-day is a real hot day and there is all sorts of "straffing" going on, and I hear this morning the Huns are getting it pretty badly down South. Oh, I forgot to tell you, dear, that I received the movie stills. I simply adore the one of you on "Blackie." Who's the dead man up against the tree? I don't think I know him.

A dispatch rider has just arrived with a bunch

of new patrols for us to do to-day, which means I must go up at once. All day, we patrol the lines, and if by any chance another squadron has a different job on, we have to take over their patrols for the day. . . . I will try and continue this later, dear. Good-by for the moment.

September 7, 1916.

. . . I have only just come down from a long patrol and altho it's quite warm here, I nearly froze to death.

I received three wonderful letters from you this morning, darling. It certainly makes my day happy when I hear from you. I was very sorry to hear of your accident in the Marmon. Do be careful, darling, won't you? I don't think you can come to much harm as long as you don't drive too fast. I'll bet old Filby was scared stiff. . . .

I'm simply crazy to get a picture of you in your soldier suit. I'll send one to the *Tatler* as you seem to be their pet for the moment.

The Lunatic women that were let loose were, I think, all collected again. I feel awfully sorry for them. They have a panic every time a Hun

machine comes over and drops bombs. It isn't a very pleasant sensation, as you can hear the bomb whistling through the air for about twenty seconds, and you have no idea when it's going to drop. In fact, I feel sorry when I drop them myself. I don't often do it now as I have been given a better job and better machine, and I now escort the bombing machines to fight off the Huns should they attack, but as a rule they don't!! They keep a long distance behind and follow you all over the place in case something should go wrong with your engine, and then of course they would be on you like a pack of wolves. But unless they are very superior in numbers you can usually get them running.

Oh, darling, I wish you were coming with Coralie — but you will come at Xmas, won't you, darling, and then I suppose I shall get a job in England, but if not then, a little later. They rarely keep a pilot out here more than eight months, as their nerves won't stand it, and I've been out here three months to-day. . . .

September 8, 1916.

Yesterday I had to move my quarters to a more desirable place a mile away, and I was so busy with packing and other business that I didn't write to you. I meant to write in the evening, but it was the C. O.'s birthday, and we had a little party which lasted quite late, and I was much too tired to even hold a pencil. I will try and make this a long letter to make up for it, darling. You mustn't think, sweetheart, that I'm falling off a little in my writing, because I'm not. I just love writing to you, and I'm awfully unhappy when I can't.

I had three more letters from you yesterday, sweetheart, saying how ill you had been. It has worried me terribly, my darling, but of course you are better by now, but you must take more care of yourself, and not overdo those water scenes, or anything in which you are liable to take cold. Standing around all day in wet clothes is liable to kill the huskiest person in the world, and you are not strong, and for my sake you must be more careful. . . .

This morning I received the cable you sent Father. I don't know who starts these rumors

about me, but you mustn't pay any attention to them, dear. My name is down in a "next of kin" book in the office, and should anything happen to me at all, you will be the first to hear of it, and Father next. You mustn't worry, darling, I don't stand half the chance of being killed out here as most of the yaps do at home crossing the streets.

I don't think there is a chance of my seeing Coralie for some time, dear. . . . I received the Sunday papers from Dodd yesterday too, darling. They are awfully interesting. One of our pilots used to be an artist before the war. He is a very clever artist and I have commissioned him to paint you two oil paintings of aeroplanes in flight. One of them is finished already, but of course I'm not allowed to send it to you, but I know you will be pleased with it, darling, as it's really quite brilliant. . . .

Darling, I'm running out of material, but this isn't a bad letter for me, is it? Thank that boy Rastus for his letter, and give him a big kiss, also Tell and the other pets. . . .

September 10, 1916.

Got a sweet little letter from you to-day. I was very surprised to get it, as I didn't expect any for a few days now, but this one must have been left behind. According to your letter, sweetie, you are still in bed. Poor child, you must have been lonely. . . . By the way, darling, I don't think if I were you I would put any money into any aeroplane company. . . . I'm quite sure that any company of that description must have several million dollars at the back of them to make good. You see, a machine can be worth twenty thousand dollars one minute (and on account of a bad landing) be worth twenty cents the next. Any way, dear, let me hear *all* about it before handing over any money. . . .

I went out to dinner last night to one of our gun batteries, and in the middle of dinner they suddenly had a "straf." It was perfectly wonderful, I wish you could have been there. I fired one of the guns, and my ears have been ringing ever since. I brought my shell case home with me. I shall have it made into a lamp or something for Mother. Of course I'll have a lot of souvenirs for our home. They will be interesting

after the war. I've got several now, so we can give some away. Brad will want one, and Ham too. I guess one will be able to buy them after the war, but they won't be so interesting. Mine will have a sort of little history attached.

I must close now, my little mate. God bless and keep you safe and well. I do so long for the time to come when I shall be with you again. I guess you will be in England by the time I get leave — won't it be wonderful, darling? . . .

September 11, 1916.

I've been flying around to-day, and it's been frightfully cold, and absolutely nothing of the slightest interest has happened. One gets quite blase now if one isn't shot at, or something. One of our chaps has just come back from England and his wife. He is the only officer besides myself who is married. Gee! I wish I could come and see you for a week. I get awfully lonely at times. . . .

To-day in the village square they gave away a lot of medals to a bunch of interpreters, who deserve them about as much as N. B. It's been a great day for the villagers. . . .

September 12, 1916.

. . . I had a letter from Father to-day saying that Coralie had arrived. They are, of course, awfully excited. I shall probably get a letter from Corrie in a day or two. I wonder how long she will stay.

I'm part owner in another dog and when I teach the man how to do the fox-trot he's going to give her to me. She is the sweetest little Mutt you have ever seen. Just like the mutt you see in a circus with the dunce's cap on, that runs around and does nothing. She is like a toy fox terrier, only very low on the ground and colored brown and white. Her name is "Quinnelle" — named after her former master, a pilot who had the misfortune to have his bombs go off under his machine. "Quinnelle" is going to have puppies in a day or two. The father is a Seal-yiam, or thinks he is. I'm dying to see the pups.

When we are not flying now we are busy building ourselves a tennis court — a hard one — so that we can play in the winter. There is an awful lot of work to a tennis court, but we expect to have it finished in a week.

The rye whiskey hasn't come yet, but I expect it any day now. We are all most excited about it. I have been transferred from my Flight to Headquarters, which means that I take my meals with the C. O. (commanding officer). The mess is, of course, much better, and quite a good thing for me, as I get to know all kinds of Colonels and things.

I hope all this small talk doesn't bore you, darling, but you know how I am handicapped as regards real news.

I must say good night now, my dear. May God bless you and keep you safe and bring us together again very soon.

September 13, 1916.

. . . Two very welcome letters came from you this morning. Also the music. Thank you a thousand times, Sweetie. You do so much to make me happy. . . . There is very little civilian population here in these parts, and absolutely no NICE people. Only peasants. You see they are in the war area and everybody with the fare left long ago for more desirable spots.

Do you ever remember looking over the rail

of a ship and seeing steerage passengers? Well, they would be first class passengers compared to the people around here.

The French Army are quite different I'm told. They are allowed to go to Paris very often, and also if they wish they can have their wives live in the towns they are billeted in. They also give away all kinds of medals on the slightest provocation. If I were in the French Army I should have already had the "Médaille Militaire" as I have done over one hundred hours action service in the air and any one in the French Flying Corps who has done that, gets a medal.

The Germans get more medals still, judging from the prisoners we take. The French are a very wonderful people. They have all adapted themselves to this war in a most admirable way.

The rotten weather is beginning to set in now, I'm afraid. It has rained all day to-day, and it's so cold and miserable I don't know what I shall do in the Winter. I just hate the cold weather!... I've got a little oil stove in my hut trying to keep the puppies warm, but I'm afraid it gives off more smell than heat.

I hope you don't mind my writing in pencil,

dear. It's so much easier for me and you are apt to get a longer letter this way.

Sweet little Rastus — I just love to hear about his little tricks. I'm so crazy about that little ape. . . . My candle is going out. I must close in a hurry now. I don't think this is a very nice letter, dear, even if you are able to read it. . . .

September 16, 1916.

. . . My last two or three letters have been dated wrong. I've written every day, but until to-day I had lost track of the date.

We are terribly busy just now. I only wish I could tell you all about it, but I can't, darling, so you must wait until I return, and if you keep my letters, as I do yours, we can go over them together and I will be able to remember lots of things that occurred. I also want to warn you, dear, that there might be a day or two in which I shall be unable to write at all, as the Flying Corps is not a stationary Unit, especially if there is any sort of an advance.

I had lunch with Hubert Neville to-day. He sends his love to you. They are giving a concert which they want me to go to not far from here. I shall go and I will let you know all about it.

What do you think? —— has gone back to England on "home defense" work. He's only done a few weeks work out here, but he's lost his nerve and can't stand it, so he's gone home. Gee! He's lucky, although I shouldn't like to have people say I was frightened. I'd have to be awfully scared to give up here, but I shall be due to come for a spell at Xmas time, sweetheart. Oh, I do so long to see your sweet face again. I just daren't let myself think about it or I'd get so blue and downhearted.

I'm so glad to read in your letters, my love, that you are all well again. . . . I was awfully amused to read about Tell in the stateroom, sitting up in the seat looking out of the window. He must have looked a little like a "dog," because the porter knew it wasn't a "boy." . . .

I'm so glad the little aluminum rings made a hit, dear. They have really no value except as a "souvenir de la guerre." I wonder if you have received the coffee glasses yet, and if you know how they work.

This is all I can write for to-day, precious. . . . How happy I shall be to come back to you . . .

September 17, 1916.

I've just returned from Hubert Neville's concert. It was really quite good. I will tell you more about it in my next letter. This is the first opportunity I've had, dear, to sit down and write to you, and it is so late that I can't say much. I've got some dirty work in "Hunland" at dawn to-morrow, so I must go to bed at once in order to feel at all fit. I received a sweet cable from you this morning, also the Gramophone records at last.

Bless your little heart, you are so good to me, and I don't know how to thank you.

France,
September 19, 1916.

I wasn't able to write you at all yesterday we were so frightfully busy — and I'm afraid this isn't going to be a very fat letter. I will try, darling, very hard to catch up so that you won't feel neglected.

I received a letter from you to-day, darling, but it was rather a sad little one. You had just heard of the rumor of my being made prisoner. I hope I never shall be, darling, but if I am you

will know about it long before any rumor gets around. . . .

I don't think the war will last more than one year more any way. . . . We have all sorts of work to do, now the push is going on. I guess it will let up a bit as the weather gets bad.

This is all I can write to-night, my precious. . . .

FRANCE,
September 20, 1916.

. . . To-day I received three lovely long letters from you. Gee, it's so wonderful to hear all the news, darling. I'm so excited when I get letters from you and so miserable when I don't. I'm so glad you didn't get frightened about that silly rumor about my being killed. —— is such a fool and an awful funk. He started to learn to fly long before I did and could have left for France long before. He speaks as if I got out here early because I was well known as a dancer, when, as a matter of fact, that has been my biggest handicap, as every one seems to think it is impossible for one to be on the stage and be any good at anything more serious.

However, I'm pretty well installed now, and

one of our Senior Officers told me to-day that he wanted to advise me to learn all I could about machines and men in the Squadron, as I was one of the few pilots here who would be capable of commanding a flight, and that I would be made flight commander in a few months, in all probability.

I shall be glad to hear, darling, that we have a new woolly monkey. They must be awful cute, but I don't think there is a monkey in the world that could beat that boy Rastus.

I'm happy to say that I think there is absolutely no doubt that Germany is beaten, and will never be on the offensive again. Of course she can hold out, for God knows how long, but I don't think she will for more than a year.

I'm due for eight days leave in a week, darling, but I'm not going to take it, as it would be January before it came round again — that's about every three months. I'm going to put it off until you come to England and then I shall take it. I know you want me to, and I want to have you meet me, my little wife, and be the first I see when I come home. It's going to be so very wonderful, darling, I hardly dare to think of it

Captain Castle and his monkey, Jeff, Englewood, N. J., 1917.

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for fear it may not come true. . . . It's late now, dear, and very cold, as this is only a canvas hut. This isn't a very long letter as I promised, but I will continue it to-morrow, sweetheart. I don't want to stop writing to you, but I'm shivering so I guess I'd better. . . .

September 24, 1916.

First of all let me thank you for the coffee, *Vanity Fair*, and Sunday papers which arrived to-day with two adorable letters which I have only had time to glance through up till now. One of your letters, darling, enclosed the one of mine with all the "scratchings out." It's simply too bad I can't tell you some of the news, darling, but I will have an awful lot to tell you when I see you.

To-day I got an awful fright. An "Archie" gun almost got a direct hit on me. It shot away a big bit of my rudder, making it terribly hard for me to steer, and a piece of the shell went right through the back of my leather coat, luckily it didn't touch me, and all was all right, but of course I had no idea how bad the rudder was until I got down. As long as you keep "zig-

zagging" and turning your machine, they very rarely can hit you, so I don't usually get them as close as that.

The war is going along awfully well, and there is enough excitement here to last me for the rest of my life. Darling, after the war, and I have to put in my ten weeks flying a year, of course you can be with me. You can put on your monkey-suit, and come up with me if you like! Would you like to, sweetie? It would be such fun if we could go up together, and fly around to various places.

I'm so glad you take my Lou (Wolf) out with you, darling, wherever you go. He's a nice Lou, and I like to think of him being with you. . . .

I simply don't get a minute to write to anybody but you, dear. I did manage to write to Mother last night. The pups are getting along very well considering their age (two days). Quinnelle is very fond of them. They are four girls and one boy.

I must close now, my pretty one. God bless you, my little wife. . . .

FRANCE,
September 27, 1916.

I'm so sorry I can't write you the long letters you write me. It seems such a shame, but I really, sweetheart, have so very much to do all the time, and when I do get some spare time I have to do all sorts of jobs that come to me as Mess President.

I don't think I told you all the things I have to do now, but they include the collecting of all the money from the officers, for their mess bills, and paying for all the food, seeing that the men keep the place clean and the baths hot, and in fact, it's sort of a Stage Manager for the Squadron.

I've done an awful lot of things since I've been Mess President. I've had built a great big bathroom with three baths and a shower and a regular hot water system, with an American furnace so that we can get hot water at all hours. Before we could only get sponge baths and unless you got there early you had to have cold water. Now everybody has a hot bath every morning, and the bathroom is one of our pet exhibits when we have guests or visitors.

I've also built a big bar with running water

and an ice chest, etc., etc. It's quite a lot of fun because I can get all the men I want to build and do things. I'm going to have a tennis court built soon. A hard one, for the winter. During the cold weather we have much more spare time.

I received the movie photographs this morning, darling. I think they are perfectly wonderful. . . .

September 29, 1916.

. . . Yesterday again I was too busy to write to you. Please forgive me, darling. I know you work so hard in this picture, and you need my letters badly, so I will try and not let it occur again. I used to be able to send you a picture post card or something when I couldn't write, but now all that is stopped.

Your account of —— coming to dinner and setting his cigars off amused me immensely, dear. I can just see you.

This won't be a long letter, sweetheart, because I have quite an important job to do over Hunland. The weather is bad now but as soon as it clears up I've got to push off. We have just heard that Roumania is coming in on the Allies' side, which is good news. Our flying corps is

doing awful well. We've got it all over the Germans in that direction.

I received the invoice for the gramophone records and I guess I'll get them all right now.

I do hope you get your coffee glasses, darling. I had to send them by parcel post. How is the Marmon going? Will you send me a picture of it with its new wire wheels? Gee, I wish I could have a ride in it. It seems years since I drove a car.

My poor little mate, how you have suffered with your head! . . . I am sending my letters to 120 again as by your letter, it seems you will in all probability be in New York or Newport by the time this arrives. I wonder where you are now, Sweetie. And what you are doing? Oh, if I could only see you for just a minute it would make me so happy. Last night I dreamed I was leaving America and you to come to this now, and when I started to wake I thought to myself, "It's only a dream — I'm in bed and haven't gone to the war at all," and just then a gun woke me up thoroughly, and here I was in my hut. I told my hut-mate and he says that after the war he's going to sleep in one of these

huts and have fireworks set off in the morning and an engine whizzing outside the door so he can feel thoroughly at home.

My dear, wonderful little wife, I long for you so. The suffering I endure by being away from you makes this war very insignificant to me. One day we shall be together again, my precious.

October 9, 1916.

I received two more letters from you this morning, and also lots of photos. They are so very sweet, some of them perfectly marvellous. The letters were very dear and precious. . . . Yes, dear, I do get all the papers and episodes, etc., you send me, nothing is forbidden coming to me, but I am not allowed to send newspapers or pictures in any form.

I should like "Tell's" stud fee to be $25.00, and the money to be spent in a cup for the best police dog trained in America. Cup presented by "Tell." Oh! if only I could have that "Lou" (French Wolf) here with me. . . . O dear, next to you, darling, I think I want that boy of mine. Quinnelle is very sweet, but when I talk seriously to her she doesn't understand, she just looks up

and wags her tail, and thinks I've got a piece of meat for her. The puppies this morning had their first meal out of a saucer. They were very cute, they kept dipping their faces too far in the dish, and getting milk up their noses.

I'm so sorry Elroy and the babies have left you, dear, it must be frightfully lonely, and you must miss them terribly. Yesterday one of our "observers" did a wonderful thing, while up on patrol: they were "archied" pretty badly, and the pilot was hit on the head with a piece of shell and killed. Of course the machine began to fall, and the observer, while it was coming down, climbed out of his seat into the pilot's, and succeeded in landing the machine in the "Aerodrome." He made a bad crash, landing, but he wasn't hurt at all. The pilot had died almost instantly. As observers don't know anything about flying except what they see, this was a splendid effort of this chap, and he will probably get the "Military Cross" for it.

The war news has been pretty good lately, but I'm afraid it will be a long time yet before it's over. It's really too bad because both sides are so heartily sick of it. . . .

Well, little wife, I must close now. I'm so very, very sorry I can't write you a nice letter. God bless you, darling. . . .

October 13, 1916.

. . . I have just been told that I am to proceed to England to-morrow morning, and shall probably be there three days. There isn't a boat I can catch until Sunday, so I shall take that I think. After reporting to the War Office I shall go straight to Norwich and see Father. My cold is much worse to-day so I don't feel very much like travelling, but it will be a change for me and I have been so frightfully miserable these last few days. . . .

Cavendish Hotel, London,
October 15, 1916.

. . . I've just arrived in London. Gee, it looks good to be in a real town. I've just called up Corrie. She's coming to Ciro's with me. . . . I'm staying at this little Hotel. It's awfully nice. The chap who is on leave with me has lived here before. His name is Captain Balcombe Brown. Oh, darling, I wish you were here. There's been a lump in my throat ever since I arrived because

I've been so homesick for you, Sweetheart. . . . Good night, my dearest. Excuse my haste. God bless you.

HOTEL METROPOLE, FOLKESTONE, ENGLAND,
October 22, 1916.

We are held up here on account of there being no boat; we were to sail at 7:30 this morning, but the boat is not leaving until to-night. This is a very dull place at this time of year. I've been sleeping most of the day. We should have been at the Squadron by this time if we hadn't been held up.

Joe Coyne gave us a parting dinner last night at Ciro's. . . . I have just heard that Norman Prince, who was in the French Flying Corps, has been killed. Did you know him? . . .

I hope, darling, you like the paintings —— is bringing you, the silver machine is the new one we are flying, the other is the one we are giving up.

I must go now, sweetheart, and get my things on the boat; I'm loaded up with two hundred oysters, a salmon and haddock, and numerous bottles of drinks, some sweets and a large cake

and many other things. My luggage looks something like yours does when you travel.

Good-by, my darling, I am dying to get back and see if there are any letters for me from you, sweetie. . . .

HOTEL FOLKESTONE, BOULOGNE-SUR-MER,
October 23, 1916.

We are held up here for eighteen hours; the train service is frightful, and I'm so anxious to get back to see if there is any mail for me, and also the oysters are sure to be bad by the time I get there, and it's been so much trouble to bring them all this way, with the scarcity of porters, etc. The salmon I had cooked here in the hotel, so I guess that will be all right, but it's rotten hanging around in these dead towns. We are just going for a long walk by the seaside to pass the time away, and then we shall go to the station and get on a train as early as possible, because there are thousands of people wanting to get back.

Good-by, darling, for now. When I get back I'll write you a very, very long letter to make up for these bits of notes I've been sending you. God bless you, my sweet. . . .

October 24, 1916.

I am happy again for the very first time in weeks. When I got back very early this morning I found seven sweet letters here, waiting for me. . . .

I've got an appalling lot of work waiting for me here in the Squadron, also some rather bad news; four of my friends in the flight have been killed since I've been away, two were brought down by "Archie" guns, and two were shot down by a flock of German machines. It's darned hard luck, and they were four of the nicest boys in the Squadron, but even this can't make me sad, darling, when I get sweet letters from you.

Now, Sweetheart, I am going to take your letters, one by one, and answer any little questions that are in them. I'm so terribly sorry you have to *wait* so long between my letters. I am afraid the mails are getting worse instead of better. There is nothing to make them better. The more boats or men we lose in this war means the less we can spare for the mails, and so I'm afraid nothing will improve until after the war.

About my leave, darling, we are so short of experienced pilots now, that we must remain in

France nine months before being sent home for duty in England, unless of course one's nerves won't stand it, or something like that. My nerves seem to be quite all right so I guess I'm here for another four months, but of course *nothing* is sure. I might suddenly be sent back to-morrow. Anyway, darling, I am almost sure I can get leave for Xmas, but, love, if you *have* to go right back to America again I don't think it would be worth while for you to go through those horrible journeys, and I would rather wait another month *when* you could come over for good, and then I would get my leave. I might have to come back here for about three weeks, and then come home to stay for some months anyway.

I do so long to have a little house, or flat or something, darling. I would give up my Merry Xmas willingly, just to have you with me for more than a week. You could have a fairly happy time in New York with Elroy's babies, so I will stay here and not come to England until you can come over to me.

I've got a dozen little jobs to do now, darling; I will stop and continue a little later. *Later.* — I will continue this in pencil, if you don't mind,

dear. I can write quicker and it's time I need just at present. To continue with the same subject, darling: My plans as near as one can judge are like this. I will be here at the front ordinarily until the beginning of February, then I shall be brought home and in all probability be made a Captain and given a flight in England for several months. In between that time I am entitled to a week or ten days' leave. I know you know best, sweetheart, what to do, and what you would like to do, so I must leave it entirely to you. Should anything suddenly happen, I will cable you immediately.

Darling, there is something I want you to bring me from New York, and that is a pair of Binoculars with a Zeiss lens. The *Zeiss* is the best lens in the world, and as it's German we can't get any, but I'm sure you could buy them in America. Strong field glasses are tremendously useful to us out here.

I also want a Victor record called "Walking the Dog," fox-trot. Will you send it to me, dear? I'm so pleased you have got some more pretty clothes, sweetheart; won't it be wonderful when we are in London. I shall be so proud of you. . . .

Quinnelle's pups are getting quite big now, and at the age when they are a nuisance. They have to be fed because she won't nurse them any more, and they keep on getting under the floor boards of the sheds, and I have to wallow in the mud and fetch them out. O! O! I do want a baby Rastus. If you see another one, will you bring him to me? I nearly died when I read your letter all about him. Isn't it sweet the boy not being jealous of him? I tried to get a monkey while I was in London, but I couldn't find a small one at all.

I was so very sorry to hear about poor little Blackie. I wonder if he is still alive, poor little nag — it does seem a shame. I've never heard of the black-water disease before.

Your picture in R. F. C. suit is coming out in the *Tatler* next week. I would also like them to have one of those wonderful leaping snap-shots if you can spare another one. It's nice to keep your name in the papers, all the time, and everybody I met in London asked after you, and wanted to know when you were coming back. . . .

Gee, it's cold out here, and flying is simply terrible. I wear my leather coat, and that

Raccoon coat of mine over it, and we have to put ointment on our feet now to prevent frost-bite, but I don't care much, darling, as long as I can get back to you eventually. I hope I continue to be as lucky as I have been since I've been out here.

I've got to go now, darling, and I don't think I'll have any more time to write you to-night, but this is a much longer letter than it looks; the pages are so very big. . . .

FRANCE,
October 26, 1916.

. . . I received a sweet letter from you to-day and I hope you will notice the date on this, written out as you like it.

If your film people want you to go into the water again to retake any of your stuff, I'd make them take you to Florida, or some place where it is warmer. Poor little Blackie, I do hope he gets well, and I'm so disappointed you were not able to race him at the Fair. . . .

I told you, darling, didn't I, about the good "eats" I brought back from England? Well, we had a perfectly wonderful dinner out of them last night. We had caviare, oysters, grouse,

creamed salmon and champagne. I guess it's one of the best dinners ever served out here.

I adore the last lot of snap-shots you sent me, darling; some of them are perfectly marvellous. I've got one album quite full by now, and have started another. It was just two months yesterday to Xmas!! I'm so anxious to know whether you are coming out or not. I guess we'll both be disappointed if you don't, but I shall know it is all for the best. When you do come, dear, try and bring an extra monkey with you. Everybody in the squadron, or all my friends, are so anxious to see you. They all crowd 'round when I get pictures of you. . . .

FRANCE,
Oct. 28, 1916.

. . . Six wonderful letters came for me this morning. It's too good to last I'm afraid, and I shall have to go a long while before I get any more.

I'm so very sorry about poor little Blackie, he was such a little peach. Poor darling, I guess you felt much worse about it than I do, because he was with you so recently. You were so sweet, dearest, to have taken so much care and trouble about him, and I'm glad he died that

way rather than in strange hands. We will always remember him as one of the best little sports, and one day perhaps we will find another one like him.

Every day when I think of you with your pets, darling, I thank God that I found you, who are so good to little dumb creatures. You've got the sweetest soul in the world, dear. . . .

I don't think, darling, that you need worry very much about the German submarines that come to America . . . (censored) . . . But I would much prefer you to come over on an American boat. I'm so anxious to know whether you think it advisable to stay and finish your picture before coming. God! When I think of your coming to me I get so excited I get a headache. . . .

FRANCE,
October 29, 1916.

Please excuse this funny note paper, but I shan't have time to write in my hut to-day. I'm busy all morning and I'm playing in a football match this afternoon.

I was heartbroken this morning because all the gramophone records were smashed. Dodd

should have packed them in a box with straw or wool; just *marking* them "fragile" doesn't do any good. It seems such a pity — they arrived quite well without any trouble, but of course are quite useless. Will you have another try, Darling? I hate troubling you, but you have no idea how they cheer us up here, where we don't get any music. Don't forget one called "Walking the Dog," and there is also a saxophone record called "The Blue Dog Blues." . . .

Sweetie, I am just crazy about the snap-shots of Rastus and his baby brother. Gee, I'd go mad if I saw them. They must be too adorable for anything. I'm very anxious to hear if Minto won anything in the show. I hope he did.

I'm afraid I'll have to go now, sweetheart. This isn't a very nice letter, is it? It's awfully difficult for me to write unless I'm alone; people here keep disturbing me. I'm in the shed standing by for Hostile Aircraft. I don't suppose anything will come over, but I've got to stand here just the same. . . .

FRANCE,
November 1, 1916.

. . . I've got to stay up all night to-night in the Aerodrome on account of a suspected bomb raid, so I won't be able to write you a letter. This is just to say "God Bless You and keep you through the night." . . .

FRANCE,
November 4, 1916.

. . . I received three adorable letters from you this morning, and such long ones, too. They make my letters look awfully small; I feel ashamed, but, dear, you always were better at writing than I.

I'm pleased to hear that Jim Europe's show was a success, and that your decision was a popular one.

The press cutting you sent me, sweetheart, is a lot of rot. I am not attached to the French Army, and I am no hero. I've done good work here, they say, and have made about a hundred flights over the German lines, and have led many bomb attacks, etc., but that is no more than heaps of pilots have done. Most of my work is in conjunction with Artillery now, but I shall have to wait until I see you to explain it. Darling,

I hope you are not upset at my going to England, are you? I didn't want to go, but I have to as I was the only one except the Flight Commander, in our flight, who could fly this new machine. It looks exactly like the painting Coralie has for you — the one with the blue sky showing, and, by the way, darling, will you have a photo of this painting taken? Oliver, the man who did the sketch, wants one, as he keeps a record of all his work. Don't send it to me as perhaps it should not go through the mails. Just keep it and I will give it to him later.

I will do all in my power, dear, to remain here until you have arrived in England, and I think the chances are about a hundred to one against my having to be there before you. It's just as well, really, that I was there last time, because it was a change, and you can't have any idea how this place gets on one's nerves after a few months. . . .

I've promised to go to a pierrot concert given by some Tommies to-night. I usually do a song and dance for them. When I get back I'll finish this. . . .

11 P. M. — I've just got back, Sweetie. The

show was a big success as they always are. They stand for anything out here.

I'm so excited about your new clothes, sweetheart. I shall be so awfully, awfully proud of you. I'm glad you bought yourself some pearls, darling. Oh, how I wish I could have bought them for you, but I'll buy you some one day, precious, but I guess not this Xmas. I'm going to give the chaps here as Merry a Xmas as I can. I shall get a tree and some colored balls, etc. Will you send me one of those electric sets with colored lamps? Just a small one, and a week before Xmas I shall keep back all the parcels that come for anybody, so that they can't open them until Xmas day. I shall think of you a lot that day, but I shan't be sad, because I know you will be wanting me, and will be coming to me soon.

Fancy old Minto getting first at the Fair. I'm so pleased for his sake. Well, ducky, it's past my bed time, and I'm getting sleepy. . . . Kiss all the babies for me, dear. Give the boy Rastus two kisses. I bet he looks a little gentleman in his mole skin coat. He must have a little uniform like ours. . . .

November 7, 1916.

. . . To-day has been a terrible day. Raining all the time, and no flying, but I have had a lot of work to do on machine-guns. To-night I had to go to another concert. I am getting a reputation as a "comic," and the result is I am sent for whenever there is a concert party around here. I don't like to refuse because it's usually for such a good cause, like buying comforts and for the poor chaps in the trenches. My God, how I pity them in this weather!

I haven't much news to tell you. There has been no mail of any description here for three days on account of the terrible storms on the Channel.

Are you going to California I wonder? If you are it will take *years* for our letters to get to each other. Oh, dear, I wish these two months would go by quickly. Will you send me a tin of ordinary coffee, dear? Ours is dreadful. . . .

FRANCE,
November 8, 1916.

I received two such sweet letters from you to-day. You are such a good little girl to write

me every day. Gee, your letters are all full of Xmas and coming to see me in December; and . . . now I know I've got to wait another month. Isn't it a shame, Darling? But it can't be helped. I hope they don't keep you any longer than the first of January.

I'm so glad, dear, you like the "handky." I've got the mate of it, a little woman embroidered in the corner. I shall send it to you to-morrow. You should have certainly received the coffee glasses by this time. I shall have inquiries made right away. The little whip, Sweet, I couldn't send you, as it was under the heading of "war trophies," which we are not allowed to send; but Mr. Smith, the chap who was in our Squadron, and who is on his way to Canada now, is bringing it to you.

You have no idea, love, how much fun I get out of the records you sent me. As you know, fifty per cent were broken, but the others are priceless.

I saw a Charlie Chaplin movie at the Y. M. C. A. to-night. It was terribly amusing. He reminds me so much of Rastus.

I love that last snap-shot of you and the Boy.

He does look like such a little gentleman! Well, Sweet, I must close now. Hurry up and come to me, Sweetie. . . . I'm *SO, SO* homesick for you. . . .

FRANCE,
November 10, 1916.

I've had such a busy day to-day. It's been one of those fine cold days, and I've taken the air four times. Once early this morning, on a weather test; once on a bomb raid; once up after a Hun; and once on a patrol. I feel so sleepy and I've got a headache, and to make the evening complete I've promised to dine with the Army Service Corps Officers, who are deadly dull, and who will surely make me dance for them after dinner. If you were here, you'd drive the nasty people away, but I'm all alone, and I'll have to go. Oh, dear!

Midnight

Well, the dinner is all over and it was just as I expected. I had to dance and there was a man there who sang "Dear Little Buttercup," and many other gems from the "Pirates of Penzance."

Father sent me some photos of you, Darling,

Captain Vernon Castle in his machine at Deseronto, Ontario.

NYPL, LENOX

yesterday. I love them; especially the R. F. C. one shooting a gun. . . .

November 11, 1916.

I can't write you a very long letter; there is so little I can write about here. I got a letter from you this morning telling me that you were going to California. You are probably there already.

Gee, you'll be a long way away. I'm so glad you enjoyed ——'s party, darling. I don't like to hear of you being a little hermit. I'd much rather you were having a good time. We'll have a good time when we are together again, won't we, Sweetie? I shall be so excited I won't know what to do. Darling, I love the Krazy Kat you sent me. I think they are awfully funny. Do you ever read them?

What scenes are you going to do in California? I suppose a lot of Jap stuff. I think it's terrible of them to have left those water scenes until so late. I hope you didn't catch cold, poor little mite. . . .

FRANCE,
November 13, 1916.

I received a sweet letter from you this morning telling me how you passed out after your last water scene. My poor little mite, how you must have suffered! It's the most terrible thing I have ever heard of, because you are not the fainting kind. They had no right at all to have let you go in the water when it was as cold as that. My God, I could kill them! Haven't they got any sense at all? . . . I could cry when I think of it. . . . Do be careful, Darling, and don't let anything happen to you.

Dear, I'm so sorry you didn't want me to go to England. I wish I hadn't been sent there now, although I really think I needed the change. It was so difficult anyway, to arrange anything, one way or another. If you are told to go anywhere, you go, and that's all there is to it. A chap in a Squadron near here was suddenly kicked out the other day and sent to German East Africa. It happened he was very pleased, but if that had happened to me, I should have gone mad. As it is, I'm scared stiff that I shall be sent to England for a Flight Commander before you can get

here. I'm pretty nearly the Senior Officer (flying) here now. I've told the C. O. how matters stand, and he will, of course, try and arrange it to suit me. So we mustn't worry.

I love to hear about Ephriam and Rastus. I'm so anxious to see them. I'll go crazy about that small one, I know, although there can only be one Rastus. He's the apple of his Daddy's eye, and he always will be. . . .

Well, Darling, this is all for to-day. I've had a rotten day. I've got a bunch of photographs to take over in Hunland, and it's about the most disagreeable job one can have out here. I hope with luck to have them all finished by to-morrow. . . .

November 14, 1916.

. . . I wonder what you are doing and where you are now. I imagine by your last letter, that you might be in California at this time. I hope you are there if you are going at all, because I want to see you so badly, dear, and I don't want them to postpone your departure again.

My work out here is all going to be changed. I am getting a smaller and faster machine, and

am just going to do offensive patrols and fighting in the air. I can't say I am very pleased as these small fighting machines are very cold in the winter, but of course one gets much more opportunity of distinguishing oneself. The change will probably take place in a week or two.

Do you like the paintings, darling? Oh, Dear! It's so terrible to be so far away. I must go to dinner now. . . .

FRANCE,
November 17, 1916.

I've had a rotten day to-day. . . . Had to finish my photos, and also went up on a bomb raid, which was most unpleasant; and to-night at dinner I scalded my arm with hot coffee!! We have a percolator, but to-night for some reason or other it stopped working, so I was going to unscrew the top, when the pressure of the steam was so great that it burst. The machine and most of the boiling water went up my sleeve; and now I've got a terribly painful blister on my arm about a foot long. I've had it bandaged with vaseline at the hospital, so I guess it will be all right in a few days.

It was awfully cold here yesterday — freezing

hard and below zero in the air. Ciro's was raided in London a few days ago for selling liquor after hours. Their case was tried to-day, and they will, in all probability, be closed for good. It will be rather a pity; it's the only jolly place in London for supper.

Darling, I don't know how I'm going to buy you a Christmas present. One can't get anything here. I tried to fly to Versailles for one day, so that I could get into Paris, but it can't be done. It will be terrible if when Christmas comes you don't get anything from me. . . .

FRANCE,
November 26, 1916.

I've neglected you two days!! I'm just too ashamed for words, Darling; but, sweetheart, the weather has been very good for flying, and also the Squadron wanted to give a concert, which of course was handed to me to get up. I had to write a sketch and rehearse the people, and do all the terrible things that go with getting up an entertainment. It came off last night, and was a huge success. I sang songs, played the drum, and acted in the sketch.

To-night one of our officers is leaving the Squadron, so we had to give him a farewell dinner, followed by a boxing tournament. I had to fight a Flight Commander of another Flight, and I won the bout easily.

I got some sweet letters from you to-day, dear. I can't begin to answer them to-night, and I'm too tired and worn out. But they've made me so very, very happy, Precious. One of them said you got a present for me. Hurray! Hurray! Merry Xmas! We'll have our Christmas when you come to me, won't we, darling? It will be such fun. I'm going to get fourteen days leave instead of seven. Oh, dear, I'm so excited. Send me another Krazy Kat, darling. I love them. That mouse is an awfully ungrateful little animal. He doesn't appreciate the Kat's love. I guess he's like I used to be. . . .

FRANCE,
November 28, 1916.

I've just finished one letter to you, which I sent via Norwich, so that Father can read it. It's all about the Hun I brought down, and I know it would interest him. I don't know which letter you will get first, probably this one.

The concert was a huge success. They wouldn't let me off the stage. It's such fun playing to these chaps — they appreciate it so much. After the concert I was invited to Headquarters to have dinner with the General. He congratulated me on bringing down the German machine, and we had a darn good dinner.

I was so very excited yesterday, that I have a sort of reaction to-day. I feel very tired. When you get this, dear, it will only be a few weeks when you will be coming to me. I feel so elated about it, Precious, it's all I think about. You have no idea how much thought I put on it, and your sweet, wonderful letters make me so very happy. . . .

I am awfully glad that Wilson was re-elected. It seems strange, Darling, to have you take an interest in that sort of thing. I am very glad you do. I think every one should. It's quite true about the —— papers being so unpopular over here. I got a bunch from you yesterday, though. I can forgive him anything as long as he publishes Krazy Kat. Did you read the one where Krazy cooks the breakfast and gets everything ready while the Mousie is warm in bed?

Of course, you will be able to come to Folkstone to meet me, Darling. I shall expect to see my mate on the end of the pier as the boat comes in. We might stay there one day all by ourselves. It's awfully quiet and nice, and then we could go up to town the next day. . . .

But perhaps Rastus and Ephriam would be too much trouble to bring down, and you would want to get back to them. I hope that Boy knows his daddy. Well, Sweetie, it's getting late now and I must go to bed. . . .

November 30, 1916.

There isn't much to write about. It's been an awfully rotten day — foggy and no flying. We played a hockey match this afternoon; it's quite a good game and I enjoyed it very much.

I had a sweet little letter from you this morning, Darling, and I'm sorry to notice you seemed a bit lonely. Poor little one, I feel so very sad for you 'cause I know what it is. I, too, feel so very, very much alone and miserable; and the shorter the time gets, the more irritable I feel. I am so afraid that something might happen to delay you or that you will have to go back to America soon. . . .

It's going to be a fine day to-morrow, and I've got a job to do that starts at dawn, so I must go to bed, Darling. . . .

December 3, 1916.

Yesterday I received your sweet cable saying you were on your way West. I'm so glad, Darling, and I do hope and pray you will be able to leave when you want to. I could never tell you, Darling, how I long for you and wait for the time when you will be with me. The nearer it gets, the longer the days seem and the more impatient I become.

Did I ever ask you to have a photo taken of one of the aeroplane paintings I sent you? If not, will you have it done, dear? It's the silver-colored machine I want. You might bring the plate with you. The artist, Oliver, has a photo of every picture he has ever painted with the exception of that one, and I was in such a hurry to take it when I found I was going to England that we never had time to take the photo of it.

The weather here has been terribly bad lately, and we have had very little flying to do. I'm going to send you a cable every week, Sweetie,

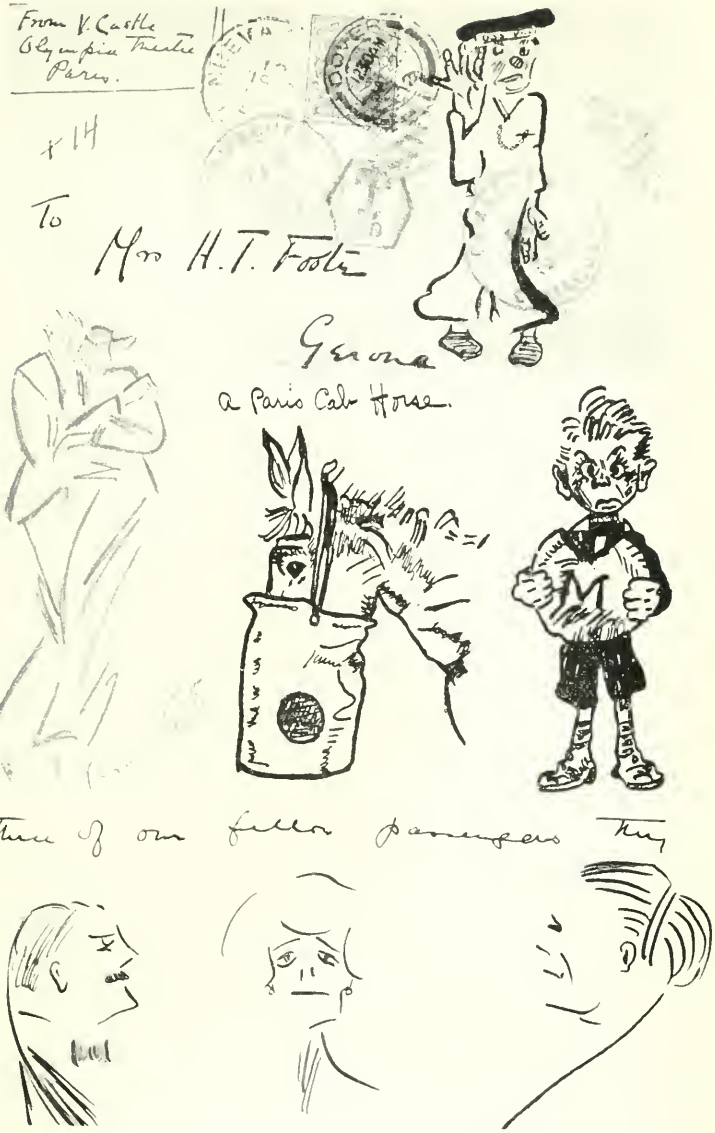
so that you won't be without some word from me. I hope by the time you get this, that you will be back in New York again.

Good night, my Precious, and God bless you and keep you safe and happy. . . .

HÔTEL D'EDOUARD, PARIS,
December 8, 1916.

. . . I guess you will be surprised to hear that I am in Paris. I've come here for a new machine which I am to fly back, but fortunately the weather has been so bad that it's been impossible to leave. It's raining and there is a thick mist all over the ground. I arrived very early yesterday morning. I'd give anything in the world, darling, if you were only here with me. Everything here reminds me of you and the wonderful times we had together.

I'd better begin at the beginning and tell you everything I've done. When I arrived of course I had to go and report myself to headquarters, the C. O. of which is Innes Kerr, or Major Lord Robert Innes-Kerr. I think you met him in New York. He was over there with George Grossmith during the run of "To-night's the



Facsimile of sketches from Vernon Castle's letters.

Night." There is also a chap there named Goldsmith, a charming man of about forty-two years, whom we know by sight very well. (He is a Frenchman.) He asked me out to lunch at the Café de Paris, which looked just the same. Louis was there and of course tickled to death to see me, and asked dozens of questions about you and Mother, etc. There is no music anywhere in Paris. I enjoyed it ever so much, especially for its sweet memories. It seems like a dream when I thought of the first time you and I went there and danced. When you come we must go there together, darling. It will be such fun.

Well, to continue my story: After lunch I left Goldsmith and went and bought my Sweet a Merry Christmas present. Hooray! Hooray! which, poor mite, I am not able to send you, but it won't be long now, and I will keep it for you. And who do you think I met on the street coming out of the shop? Maurice Soufflot! We had a drink together and a long chat which made me still more homesick for you, precious. I also met Rabajoi, and he asked me to tea at the Ritz, where they are having a sale for the Red Cross. We had tea and strolled in to the sale, and the

first thing I saw was a monkey in a cage! Well, to make a long story short, he is sitting on my shoulder now trying to find a flea in my ear. He's a Japanese monkey, just a shade bigger than Rastus, and not unlike him. Of course he isn't Rastus, and never will be, but he's getting along very well. I was three hours last night making friends, and with the aid of a banana we have formed a relationship which I hope will turn into love, without a banana. I was obliged to give two hundred francs for him, but he has been more than two hundred francs' worth of fun already. The only thing is he is so darned active, and can do a flying trapeze act better than any monkey I've ever seen, and as he doesn't like to be put back in his box I am usually detained in my room about an hour longer than I intended to be. I will write you more about him, darling, later. He is going to be very happy. The only thing that worries me is flying him back. He will have to be kept so warm, and I must fly very low on account of the pressure on his little ears, but when I get him back, I'll keep him warm all the time, and he will have the monkey's long distance flight record, and he may even become a Corporal.

He is tapping my wrist watch now, just like Rastus.

To go back to the Ritz sale: The most prominent figure there as a salesman was none other than Howard Sturgess. I nearly died when I saw him. He invited me to dinner at his apartment and I went. There were about ten people there, all men. Three we know — Harry Lehr, Frank Otis and Elliott Cowden. Elliott is quitting the war on account of his health, and is sailing for New York soon.

Poor little Jean Renault was in the French Flying Corps, and was shot down and killed by a Boche.

I stayed at Howard's until late at night, and then came home to play with little Hallad.

To-day I got up late and have been lunching at the Café de Paris with some flying men who are here to fetch machines with me. I must say good-by for now, darling. We are all going to the Theatre to-night. I don't know which one. . . .

Hôtel Edouard, Paris,
December 9, 1916.

It is very late and this is such a scratchy pen that this will only be a short note.

I was at the Aerodrome all morning, but it was so foggy and wet that I couldn't leave. I had lunch with some friends of Goldsmith's; they are Americans, but have lived in Paris for years. Their name is ——. I met Letillier there, and he invited me to a party at his house, from where I have just come. He had music, but the latest music (American) was "On the Mississippi," and terrible dancers, except two sisters, who were awfully good and not bad-looking. I had to go the rounds, but I danced with them as much as possible and had quite a nice evening. —— has a marvellous house, and of course a wonderful dinner.

Little Hallad is rather a bad ape. The chap that rooms with me here let him loose at dinner-time, and then couldn't catch him again, so he *thought* he would be all right alone, and left him. Well, I wish you could have seen the room! It looked as though a cage of monkeys had lived in it for years. There wasn't a glass ornament

that hadn't been deliberately broken. He had taken a package of safety razor blades and bitten them, one by one, into small pieces, spilled the ink, turned on the bath water, and picked the stuffings out of the quilt and a hundred other things. To-morrow I shall put a chain on him. He has got a little cage exactly like Rastus', but I'm afraid he will eat the basket work. He knows me already, and when I tell him to go to bed, he scutters into his basket rather than be caught; and he prefers to eat his meals right on the top of my head.

I must go to bed now, Sweetie. . . .

December 11, 1916.

I am still in Paris and I am absolutely fed up with the place. There is nothing to do in the evenings except go to the *rotten* Revues or out to dinner and tea with these society people.

I was at tea at ——'s yesterday and I've never been so bored in my life. I've had all sorts of invitations from the same kind of people; they are all exactly the same as when we were here. I didn't mind them for the first few days, because they reminded me of the times when I had you

here, dear, but I shall go mad if this rain and fog doesn't clear up. The funny part is, Darling, I should love to live here with you, but I'm so lost without you that I would much prefer to be at the front. . . .

I've met several of the American Legion and they can leave and take a holiday in New York any time they like.

Little Hallad is so sweet, you will love him, I know, dear. He sleeps in bed with me sometimes if it is very cold, and he is a very good, clean little gentleman. His only drawback is his extraordinary activity. I can't keep him on a hot water bottle because he bites holes in it and lets the water run out. . . .

Café de Paris,
December 14, 1916.

Vernon et moi, Maurice Soufflot, sommes au Café de Paris et regrettons *beaucoup*, *beaucoup* que vous ne soyez pas ici avec nous. Que de jolies souvenirs nous avons tous ici dans ce café! Espérons que ce bon temps reviendra!

This place makes us both sad, darling, because we used to be so happy here. Come back to me soon, darling. All my love — Vernie.

December 18, 1916.

. . . I'm so sad at having to neglect writing to you for so long, but Love, I had a rotten experience coming from Paris, and got my hand frost bitten. I will tell you all about it in my next letter. I've just arrived at the Squadron and there is tons of work for me to do.

Hallad is with me safe and happy. . . .

France,
December 21, 1916.

To-day has been a busy day for me. I've been doing all the shopping for the Squadron Xmas dinner. We are going to be about forty at table and six of the pilots are leaving next day to go to England. I wonder what sort of Xmas you will have, darling. Gee, I hope you will have a happy one!

My hand is much better now and aches very little. I'm very happy to be back in my own Squadron — and so is Hallad, poor little chap. I don't think he's been thoroughly warm since he left Paris till he got here. . . . Hallad sends his love. He's still a little wild, and doesn't like to be held, but otherwise he's a very cute ape, and very clean.

Oh, I forgot to tell you I received the photos of you and the two boys. I simply love them. . . . Hurry to me, darling, or I shall die — I miss you so. . . .

FRANCE,
March 3, 1917.

I've heard nothing about my leaving here yet, so I guess I can't be leaving as soon as I expected. The Huns are very active here just now, and we get fights every time we go over the lines.

I shall be very relieved when I hear you are safely home, though I don't feel the least bit nervous about the boat you are on. I feel it's safer than an American boat now, but at the same time, travelling at this time is dangerous. I wonder if America is coming in? I hope they do now that you are safely home. . . .

I have a terrible time every night trying to forget little Hallad. It's very funny, but I don't seem to be able to get over his death. It does seem such a shame, and I miss him terribly.

Oh, I have something to ask you to do. There is a Canadian regiment out here, and they have about forty American chaps with them, and these chaps, the C. O. was telling me, are perfectly won-

derful soldiers, and I wonder if you wouldn't care to send them some American magazines, books and papers? They are doing a lot of dirty work out here, and anything you send them would be appreciated so very much, and would bring a great deal of joy.

FRANCE,
March 9, 1917.

. . . I am hoping to have news of you soon. I am so anxious to hear that you are safe and well. I miss getting letters from you so. Nobody writes to me but you, and so the mails have not much interest for me.

It's been another dull day to-day with very little doing. There really isn't a thing I can write you about, Sweet. I'm not allowed to discuss the war, and God knows there is nothing else to talk about here. . . . I am sorry, darling, to have to write you these silly letters. I guess you'd rather have them than none at all, but when you don't get any letters to answer, it's awfully hard to write.

I only did half an hour's flying to-day, and when I did go up I couldn't see the ground, so I had to come down again. We have got some

nasty jobs to do, as soon as we get a fine day. I hope I don't get "strafed" when I'm so near to going home. . . .

March 10, 1917.

. . . To-day has been a very busy day for us and I've got a splitting headache, so this will only be just a word or two

I brought down another Hun to-day. Unfortunately it was over their lines, but it was confirmed by our batteries who saw it fall down in flames. I deserve my little credit for it, really. I saw four of their machines flying in diamond formation (that's like this):

X

X X

X

and as I was above them, I dived down on the tail of the last one and shot him down and flew away before the others had time to realize what had happened. I didn't feel like taking the risk of fighting the other three over on their side of the lines. I probably wouldn't be writing you to-night if I had. As it was, I wasn't even fired at.

There is no further news, darling. I'm terribly anxious to hear from you. I shan't be happy till I do. . . .

March 11, 1917.

. . . I wasn't able to write you yesterday. I received your cable this morning and was so very relieved to know you are safe and happy. I know, of course, I should have heard if anything should have happened to your ship, but at the same time I felt very worried.

I had a terrible experience this afternoon. It has been a very bad day and there has been no flying, but there was something very important over the lines that H 2 wanted to know, and our C. O. was told to send up four pilots, and I was one of them. I was to go over the lines at about 1,000 feet, and the others at 2,000. Well, I had hardly got over when — Bang! and I got a direct hit on my machine by a Hun Archie. It hit the engine and tore about half of it away. Of course I thought I was done for, but I still managed to keep a little control over the machine, and by the Grace of God, landed just behind our second line trenches. There is hardly anything left of the machine; as it came down it hit some barbed

wire, turned upside down and landed on its back. I was strapped in tight, and except for a cut on the nose and a bruise or two, am unhurt.

I can't understand it, and if you could only have seen the crash you wouldn't have been able to understand how I could come out unhurt. Well, the C. O. says it's the last job I need do this trip, and is going to give me easy work until I am sent home.

To-morrow I'm going to Paris to get a new machine. If the weather is bad I shall look up old Howard and "Papa Louis." I'd like to be able to spend a day or two there. . . .

It seems years since you went away. Give the Crown Prince Rastus a kiss for me. . . .

Tuesday, March 17, 1917.

. . . To-day is such a bad day that I am unable to leave for the Squadron. I am staying with the C. O. of the Aircraft Depot, who lives in a peach of a château. We have been playing ping-pong all the morning nearly. I hadn't played it for years, but it is very amusing. I guess I shall be able to get back to-morrow. I still haven't heard when I'm to be sent home,

Vernon Castle's machine after the accident in which he was killed.

The figure on the right is Victor Dodd, the Castles' butler, who enlisted to be near his master.

so it's just as well you didn't stay, isn't it, darling?

There is no news, darling, except that your photos are in *The Sketch* this week. They are splendid. I will have Father send it to you from England, in case you can't get it at Brentano's. It's in the March 14th number. . . .

APPRECIATION

BY

ELROY FOOTE